



**SOCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF RELIGIOUS SHRINES:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF INDIA AND IRAN**

**ABSTRACT
THESIS**

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Abstract

The main aim of the study is to analyse critically some eminent religious shrines of India and Iran, their pivotal roles, significance and importance in the society as well as concern of the people and believers. The study focuses on two Islamic shrines in India, namely Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti's shrine in Ajmer and Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya's shrine in Delhi and two Islamic shrines in Iran, Hazrat Abdul Azim Hasani's shrine in Ray (Tehran) and Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh's shrine in the north of Tehran.

The study aims at analysing various aspects of the shrines such as its origin, history, its sociological contribution, rituals and ceremonies performed in the shrines, as well as recognition of religious, psychological, cultural, social and economical aspects of the shrine. It also focuses on the aspects of beliefs and attitude of the pilgrims while visiting the shrines.

Celebrations, mournings and different rituals which are held at the shrines reflect the culture of a nation. These shrines however, preserve their religious sanctity, people and the believers consider it as religious turning points and paths for connecting themselves to God. The shrines are the place for offerings, requests and resort for the sufferers, shelters for the homeless, and remedy for the ill people. These places are not only meant for worshipping and supplications, but also act as centres for social interaction and decision-making.

The objectives of the present study are as follows:

1. The study aims at analysing various aspects of shrines such as its origin, history and its sociological contribution.
2. To study rituals and ceremonies performed in the shrines, as well as recognition of religious, psychological, cultural, social and economical aspects.
3. To study about the beliefs, and attitude of the pilgrims while visiting the shrines. Religious, psychological, cultural, social and economical significance and contribution of the shrines, will also be taken under the study.

4. To recognize the effect on the life of the believers with relation to the role and function offered by the shrines.
5. An attempt is made to compare and contrast the above mentioned aspects of the shrines of India and Iran respectively and to trace the similarities and differences between the two.
6. An attempt is made to conclude and find out various aspects and affairs of the shrine and its functions.

The methodology of this work is primarily based on the secondary resources and observation of the physical features of the shrines. The observation is through participation. Field work includes studying the behaviours of pilgrims, as well as by the permanent and casual employees of the shrines, rituals and ceremonies performed by them and by interviewing the pilgrims, officials and descendants of the saints.

The study focuses mainly on the social contributions of religious shrines of India and Iran with respect to their rituals and ceremonies contributing religiosity and widening the horizons of social interaction. It also focuses on the primary purpose and need of pilgrim visiting the shrine since religion is essentially a social phenomenon. It occurs in a social content and when men celebrate sacred things, they unwittingly celebrate the power of their society

The study has been divided into five chapters, with two respective chapters on four shrines including introduction, comparison and conclusion.

Shrine of Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti: Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti was born in Sijistan (Sistan) and brought up in Khurasan (Iran). He settled at Ajmer, genealogy of Khwaja connects to fourth Caliph of Islam Hazrat Ali. *Khwaja arrived in the city of Ajmer at the age of 52. Khwaja through his impressive teaching converted many people to Islam. He died at the age of 97 in 1236. His shrine is visited by large numbers of followers.*

Khadim community of the shrine runs a society named, Syed Zadgan. It has its elected representatives working on different posts. Each and every office bearers of the society are directly or indirectly **associated** with the functioning and management of the shrine. The society runs a senior secondary school in which

950 students are studying at present. It also runs a Islamic school, besides providing educational scholarships. It has also constructed a modern school for girls, a nursing home, three guest houses for the accommodation of pilgrims. It provides monthly fixed monetary help to widows.

Administration and control of the shrine of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti in India, is different from other shrines. The system has eight government appointed officials and twenty four members comprise from the Anjuman Syed Zadgan. These officials control the administrative system of the shrine.

Some important officials and functionaries of the Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti's shrine, their contribution and services are acknowledged and discussed in the study some of them are:

Sajjada Nashins: The term is applied for a disciple, who was appointed as a successor by the spiritual mentor. At the shrine of Ajmer they are available in large numbers. Pilgrim's hold firm belief that prayer done by Sajjada Nashins on their behalf would bring them easy favour and blessings of Khwaja.

Mutawallis: They are the trustee and custodian of a religious and charitable place. At Ajmer they deal with the land grants and look after the entire establishment of the shrine.

Khadims: Khadims of Khwaja's shrine are known as Syed Zadgan as they are descendents of Khwaja. Besides organizing religious rituals and ceremonies they extend their help to the pilgrims visiting the shrine, in terms of providing accommodation and guidance.

Dua Navees (writer of prayer): There are number of Dua Navees present at the shrine in order to help the pilgrims, who approach them for solving their problems.

Fatiha Khwans: They are available permanently at the shrine, enjoying the privilege hereditarily. Pilgrims pay homage to Khwaja by asking these Fatiha Khwans to pray on their behalf.

Malud Khwans: Several of them can be seen, sitting in the premises of the shrine. They recite hymns in praise of Khwaja.

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Qawwals: They are always present at the shrine, to sing hymn with musical instruments. Pilgrims listen with utter devotion and reverence.

Shoe keepers: There are several shoe keepers sitting at the path of market and also near to the doors of the shrine. Their work is to look after the shoes of pilgrims against the cash payment.

Beggars: Men, women, children and physically challenged are seen sitting and moving on streets near the shrine and in the market outside the shrine. Pilgrims given them money and arrange food from the hotel in order to gain favour.

Market: There are several shops selling fragrance sticks, flowers, candles, clothes, sugar plums etc to the pilgrims, which are used for praying and of flower, candles, clothes, sugar plums etc to the pilgrims, which are used for praying and offering *nazar* at the shrine.

Vendors: They sell shoes, decorative, baskets, candles, fragrance, sticks, bags, clothes, jewelleries, flowers etc.

Rituals and ceremonies of the Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti's shrine are categorically divided into, daily, weekly, monthly, yearly rituals and final day ceremonies.

Daily rituals: Everyday three important rites are performed at the shrine. Khidmat (performed twice a day it is exclusive privilege of khadims), illumination (candle lightening ceremony before evening prayer), Karka (closing of the main doors of the shrine).

Weekly rituals: On the eve of every night between Thursday and Friday a special gathering is organized in the eastern courtyard called Ahata-e-Noor.

Monthly rituals: On every sixth of the lunar month, a special gathering is arranged to mark the sad demise of Khwaja. The function and its process is slightly abridged during the month of Ramadan.

Yearly rituals: Besides all these functions a number of death anniversaries of great saints are observed throughout the year. Eid- Milad-un-Nabi is celebrated to mark the birth anniversary of Prophet Mohammad, Annual Urs is observed on 25th Jamadi-us-Sani, the flag hosting ceremony over the Buland Darwaza takes

place, Qul final day ceremonies is observed on the eve of 6th Rajab, the celebration attains its zenith of fervour. Packed with the pilgrims, rites and prayer is done.

Pilgrims are allowed to enter the shrine to pay homage, recite prayer (Fatiha), offer cloth sheets (*chadar*) and flowers. They are guided by khadims who also recite Fatiha, pray for them, place a portion of cloth on the head of the pilgrims and help in offering flowers.

Pilgrims belonging to different age, gender and class come in large numbers, among them medium and lower income classes are found in large numbers. On Thursday, Friday, holidays and ceremonial days there are approximately 50000 pilgrims, visiting the shrine. Whereas on other days there are approximately 30000 pilgrims belonging to various, countries such as Pakistan, Iran, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Burma, Afghanistan, Africa and Europe come to the shrine for various purpose, mainly pilgrimage, performing Fatiha, *nazar*, attending functions and ceremonies and finally for praying for the fulfillment of their needs. They firmly believe in the miraculous power of Khwaja.

In order to impress upon his divine mission and himself being a spiritual mentor Khwaja performed several miracles consciously and unconsciously. Hence many pilgrims are drawn towards the shrine believing in the miraculous power of the spiritual mentor.

Shrine of Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya: Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya was a great Sufi saint of the fourteenth century India. Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya was a devoted disciple and follower of Baba Farid, who gave him religious teachings. There after he gave teachings to his disciples and managed to convert several people to Islam. He died in the year of 1325. His shrine is visited by several pilgrims

Administration of the shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya at Delhi is distinct and unique. It is not a *waqf* (charity) property. The administration and functioning of the affairs of the shrine is controlled by the successor of Hazrat. A period of one week is allotted to each successor and his family for performing the

duties. The administration changes on every Wednesday after night prayer and it is handed over to the other successor and his family for a week.

Some officials and functionaries of the shrine are studied, such as:

Sajjada Nashins: They play major role in functioning the affairs of the shrine smoothly. Their first duty is to guide the pilgrims. Needy pilgrims come to them and kiss their hands and tell their problems and needs. Pilgrims pay cash money or gifts after been guided by them.

Khadims: Khadims give their valuable services to the shrine in return pilgrims give them offerings and cash money. They are responsible for arranging and managing the rituals and ceremonies of the shrine.

Dua Navees (writer of prayer): They are several in numbers and are always present at the shrine. Pilgrims visit them personally and tell their problems, these Dua Navees provide remedy for the problems. Pilgrims request them for a written Dua against cash payment.

Qawwals: Several Qawwals can be found at the shrine. They sing hymns in praise of Hazrat Nizamuddin. Pilgrims pay money to these Qawwals.

Shoe keepers: Several shoe keepers are present at the gate of the shrine. Since pilgrims are suppose to put off their shoes before entering the shrine, they give their shoes to these shoe keepers who look after it, against cash payment.

Beggars: They can be seen in huge numbers at the shrine. Usually at the way and path which goes to the shrine. The pilgrims have been encourage these beggars by giving money, thus they have become hyperactive.

Markets: Shop keepers draw maximum benefit from the pilgrims placed around the shrine. They sell items for the rituals and ceremonies of the shrine. In these shops items used for rituals are sold, such as, candles, fragrance sticks, prayer sheets, flowers, sugar plums and religious books. They also sell general items such as clothes, sweets, Jewelleries etc

Vendors: There are several vendors around the shrine. They sell items for offerings and rituals. They also sell general items such as luxuries, cosmetics, candles, fragrance sticks and cloth for offering.

Rituals and ceremonies of the shrine of Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya are categorically divided into, daily, weekly, monthly and yearly rituals.

Daily Rituals: Every morning one of the Mutawalli, gives call of prayer (Azan) and opens the door of the shrine. The pilgrims and needy gather in large number, the premises as well as the grave is cleaned by the Khadims.

Weekly rituals: On Thursday special programmes are organized. The ceremony begins with the recitation of the holy verses of Quran and cover *naat khwani*, *manqabat khwani*, *halqa-e-zikr*, *muraqabat*, *salatwasalam* in the praise of Prophet Mohammad, and ends with Dua. Friday prayer is held in the Khalji mosque every week.

Monthly rituals: On the 18th of every Qamari month Fatiha of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya is performed. The function ends with Dua (prayer) at 11.30 A.M, *tabarruk* in form of sweets are distributed. On the 20th of every Qamari month, prayer (Fatiha) of Hazrat Ali is performed between evening and night prayer. Similarly the 5th of every Qamri month, Fatiha of Baba Farid Ganj Shakar is performed at the evening. Similarly on the 11th of every Qamri month the prayer (Fatiha) of Hazrat Ghous Pak is performed.

Yearly rituals: *Urs* is celebrated to mark the sad demise of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya on 18th of Rabi-us-Sani. Pilgrims and followers of Hazrat come from all over the country and out side the country to pay tribute. Certain political leaders including Prime Minister, President have come to the shrine and have attended the celebrations out of faith or to gain political mileage. Besides all these, renowned Ulemas (spiritual leaders), orators are also invited at the *Urs*. Women are not allowed to attend the function. Some special programmes are organized on *Urs* such as, all India *mushaira*, all India spiritual *tableeghi ijtema*, *jolous chader*, *Urs mahal* upto Dargah Hazrat Peer Zamin Nizami. On the closing ceremony of *Urs* on 20th Rabi-us-Sani. Prayer of Hazrat Ali is held. *Urs* of Hazrat Ameer Khusro the first disciple of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya is celebrated every year from 16th to 20th of Shawwal. He was a great poet of Urdu and Persian language. Every year at the end of the month of Safar special programme is organized on the occasion of *yaum-e-wiladat* (birth) of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya.

On the 10th of the month of Moharram, the martyrs of Kerbela tragedy are revered and their sufferings are recalled by the Muslims belonging to every part of the world. They express their deep grief over the tragedy and pay tribute to Mohsin-e-Islam and Insaniat (humanity) Imam Husain (grandson of Prophet Mohammad). On 11th of the month of Rabi-ul-Awwal, every year, the Milad (religious congregation) and birthday of Prophet Mohammad is organized at the shrine. Like other rituals and customs observed at the shrine the festival of Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul Azha is done with great fervour and zeal. *Namaz* (prayer) of both Eids are held in Khalji Mosque.

The shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya is one of the distinct and important shrine of the world, where pilgrims are always present in large numbers they come from various countries, cities, and rural areas. They belong to various religion, sect, caste and creed. There are approximately 40000 on Thursday, Fridays, holidays and ceremonial days on other days the numbers are 25000. Pilgrims belonging to different age, (old, young, kids) and gender (men and women) can be seen at the shrine, they come for various purpose ,mainly pilgrimage, observing Fatiha, *nazar*, performing rituals and ceremonies and finally for praying for the fulfillment of their needs. They firmly believe in the miraculous power of Khwaja.

Several miracles are attributed to Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. Hence many Pilgrims are drawn towards the shrine believing in the miraculous power of the spiritual mentor.

Shrine of Hazrat Abdul Azim Hasani: Hazrat Abdul Azim Hasani is famous as Syed-ul-Karim. He was born in Madina in 173 A.H (789). Hazrat Abdul Azim was highly respected by the contemporary Imams and saints, and had a special popularity. Several pilgrims visit everyday for performing pilgrimage and participating in the rituals and ceremonies held at the shrine.

Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine have facilities like library, Museum, clinic, faculty, various schools, publication centres, endowments and economical activities. Different class of people get benefited from the enrichment of the shrine.

Administration of the shrine is controlled by twelve board of trustees, several religious and local reliable persons and a representative who is selected by the leader of Islamic Republic of Iran. Mutawalli the head of board of trustees has eight assistants with specific duties.

Some important officials and functionaries, their contribution and services to the shrines are acknowledged and discussed in the study. Some of them are:

Mutawallis: Senior Mutawalli is selected by the leader of Islamic Republic of Iran. These Mutawallis perform the following duties such as: Checking offices, dealing day to day affairs, financial, welfare, health and therapeutic affairs, collecting money of the shrine's fence, charity boxes, endowments, economical companies of the shrine, financial participations of the shrine in producing agricultural as well as other products. They also check the constructions of the buildings and sacred places, blacksmiths, installations, plumbing, carpentry, tailoring, gardening organizations etc. They also coordinate with working organization which are related to the shrine or with foreign organizations.

Khadims: They are 120 in numbers comprising male and female. Their duties include cleaning the surroundings, guiding the pilgrims, answering their queries, and solving their difficulties mainly about distributing the charities.

Disciplinary officers: There are 90 disciplinary officers (men and women) in the shrine. They maintain discipline and prevent the crowd in specific part, guide pilgrims to the courtyards and different parts of the shrine.

Ferashes (servants): There are 42 Ferashes in Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine who work in three shifts. Their duties include cleaning different parts of the shrine, sweeping, washing, washing carpets, and covering different floors with carpets.

Shoe keepers: There are 46 shoe keepers in Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine, who work in three shifts, men shoe keepers keep men shoes and women shoe keepers keep women shoes, and give pilgrims a receipt.

Roza Khans (preachers): They sit in the porches of the shrine every afternoon, especially on Thursday and Friday afternoons, because there are more pilgrims in the shrine on these days. Some pilgrims pay their debts to fulfill their needs as to solve their problems by giving money to a preacher and want him to elegize

which is usually about Imam Husain's sufferings in Kerbela. They arouse pilgrims emotions.

Eulogists: They elegize in various mourning ceremonies with sad and happy poems and eulogies. They are invited by Mutawallis and in return they receive money.

Dua Navees (writer of prayer): They sit in the markets, some pilgrims who have problems, approach to them, they write prayer and pray on behalf of them, in return pilgrims give money to them and get satisfaction.

Markets: There are many small, big, new and old markets around Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine. Before visiting the shrine, pilgrims go to these markets to purchase necessary items like veil, head dress (rosary), prayer rug, candles, and charities and then visit the shrine. After returning from shrine they again visit these markets to purchase some gifts for their families and relatives such as cookies, chocolates, sweets, Jewelleries, clothes, stuff, head dress, prayer rug etc.

Vendors: There are many vendors in markets and allies around Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine. They sell some items to the pilgrims such as sweets, chocolates, decorated items, artificial Jewelleries, candles, lute, perfumes. These vendors do not have a specific place, they keep on moving in the area of the shrine.

Beggars: Men, women and children beg in markets, and streets around the shrine. Some beggars are blind and paralytic, and show their faulty limb or hands, to arouse pilgrim's sympathy. Pilgrims give some money to them to increase the heavenly reward of their pilgrimage.

Different rituals and ceremonies are performed by khadims and Mutawallis they include:

Daily rituals: Khadims wear special clothes before Aazan (calling to prayer) everyday and recite peace upon Prophet Mohammad and his family. After cleaning the items and belongings of the shrine, they maintain discipline and guide the pilgrims. Another ritual which is performed by Khadims is the lightening of lamps (*cheragh*). All the pilgrims leave the shrine at 11 O'clock at night. Khadims close the doors respectfully and lastly, the senior Khadim closes

the main door.

Weekly rituals: Ashura (the tenth day of Moharram) prayer is performed at 7 o'clock in the morning on every Monday, it is about the commemoration of Imam Husain and his followers in Karbela. Komail prayer is another prayer which is performed in Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine on every Thursday. Nodbeh prayer is performed in Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine in the morning on every Friday. It is about the commemoration of Prophet Mohammad and his family. Friday prayer is also performed in Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine on every Friday noon, in which pilgrims, Khadims, employees, and Ray's residents participate.

There are also some rituals on Friday afternoon every week in which many pilgrims participate to recite Quran and to pray for the dead (Fatiha).

Monthly rituals: On the last day of every solar month Khadims clean or perform dusting rituals (*ghobar rubi*) of Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine in front of board of trustees. At first they collect the shrine's money then they clean the items of shrine's fence.

Recitation of Quran, praising for Prophet Mohammad, Hazrat Ali and Hazrat Abdul Azim are another rituals performed at the beginning of every lunar month, in which khadims, employees and pilgrims participate.

Yearly rituals: The birthday anniversary of Hazrat Abdul Azim falls on the fourth day of Rabi-us-Sani. Khadims and Mutawallis arrange festive ceremonies. Hazrat Abdul Azim's death anniversary falls on 15th Shawwal. Khadims cover the whole courtyards and porches of the shrine with black ribbons as a symbol of lamentation. On the birth anniversary of Prophet Mohammad all parts of the shrine are decorated with green stuffs, coloured ribbons, flowers, and lights during this day festive ceremony is arranged, in which eulogists and poets recite some eulogies about Prophet Mohammad and people pray (recite peace upon Prophet Mohammad). On Prophet Mohammad's death anniversary, various parts of the shrine are covered with black stuffs. Khadims and employees wear black clothes as a symbol of mourning and participate in mourning ceremonies, listen to eulogies, and pray for Prophet Mohammad. Eid-ul-Fitr is the festival at the end of fasting month Ramadan and Eid-ul-Azha is a day of sacrifice. The

whole shrine is decorated with lights in these two great Islamic eves. Prayer (*namaz*) is held collectively on the two Eids. Eid-ul-Qadeer Khum is a festival in the memory of Hazrat Ali, on this day whole shrine is decorated with lights, and eulogists recite some eulogies. In the months of Moharram and Safar Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine is covered with black stuffs. Pilgrims especially male come to Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine from different parts of Iran to participate in *majlis*. Ramadan is a fasting month in which God gifted Quran to Muslims. Muslims read Quran each day during the month and finish the whole Quran within the month. During the month *Sahri* and *Aftar* are arranged for poor and pilgrims.

People of different age, sex and social status perform rituals at the shrine. Approximately 30000 come on Thursday, Friday, holidays and ceremonial days and on other days approximately 20000 come for pilgrimage to Abdul Azim's shrine. Majority of them are from lower and middle classes. People of various countries such as India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq and Lebanon, visit this place.

Pilgrims come to the shrine for mainly pilgrimage, performing Fatiha, *namaz*, *nazar* etc. and also to participate in rituals and ceremonies held at the shrine. They also come to solve their problems as they believe in the miraculous power of the spiritual mentor.

Shrine of Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh: Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh was the son of Imam Moosa Kazim, he lived his life full of virtue and good deeds, he established himself as an exemplary saint. Against the harsh behaviour of Bani Abbas Caliphs with Alaviyan, Imam Zadeh Saleh found refuge in Iran. He was killed by one of the Bani Abbas officers. After his death, many pilgrims come to his shrine for pilgrimage and performing rituals and ceremonies.

Shrine of Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh have facilities for the pilgrims and general people like Hammam, book shop, charity institution, health centre library etc. Different class of people are benefited from these facilities.

Important officials and functionaries related to the shrine are:

Mutawallis: Imam Zadeh Saleh's shrine has one administrative manager who is selected by the board of trustees. He is a senior Mutawalli of the shrine. Other Mutawallis control administrative, financial, cultural and technical functions.

Khadims: There are 32 male and female Khadims in the shrine who work separately. Male Khadims work for males and female Khadims work for females. They stand in the porches and the surroundings of the shrine maintain discipline, guide the pilgrims and rest. They also clean the surroundings and items related to the shrine.

Disciplinary officers: There are 21 disciplinary officers (men and women) in the shrine, they stand in the surroundings of the courtyard, entrance and exit gates of the shrine. They maintain discipline in the courtyard of the shrine by controlling the crowd of pilgrims, guide them and explain about the cleanliness of the shrine.

Shoe keepers: There are 14 shoe keepers (men and women) in the shrine who work in two parts. Shoe keepings is located in front of exit and entrance doors which leads to the porches. They keep pilgrim's shoes and give them a receipt, without charging money.

Ferashes (servants): There are 10 ferashes in the shrine who work in two shifts. They clean and wash different belongings of the shrine.

Eulogists: Some famous eulogists are invited by the Mutawallis on different rituals.

Dua Navees (writer of prayer): A large number of prayer writers sit in the markets around the shrine. Usually women visits to them and they write various prayers on the paper.

The administration of Imam Zadeh Saleh's shrine was given to Shemiranat charity institution by the approval of Islamic consultative assembly in 1984. The shrine's board of trustees consist of six religious leaders including local and governmental trustees. Administrative manager is considered as senior Mutawalli. He is responsible for managing the administration of assistants.

Many rituals and ceremonies are held at the shrine and are controlled by Mutawallis. Some of them are:

Daily rituals: Senior Khadim opens the main door before morning prayer and pays reverence to Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh. After cleaning the items and surroundings of the shrine, they settle discipline and guide the pilgrims. Daily prayers are performed collectively every day in which Khadims participate. Recitation of Quran is another ritual held in the porches around the shrine.

Weekly rituals: One of the ritual and ceremonial day only women participate to offer cloth. A big table is kept on Thursday from 9 AM to 11 AM. This big table is placed in the meeting room. Sweets, cookies, dates, fruits, dried fruits, tea are placed on it. Ashura prayer is another ritual recited in the morning every Monday at 7 AM. It is about the commemoration of Imam Husain, his family and followers and their sufferings in Karbela. Kmail prayer is a ritual which is held on every Thursday afternoon and it is a prayer for providing people's needs. One eminent person recites and others listen. Nodbeh prayer is another ritual recited on every Friday morning. It is about the commemoration of Prophet Mohammad and his family. Friday prayer is one of the prayer performed in the shrine in which pilgrims and people of the region participate. Al-e-Yaseen is also another prayer recited on Friday afternoon by an outstanding scholar of Quran.

Monthly ritual: Cleaning or dusting ritual (*ghobar rubi*) of the shrine is performed at the last day of every solar month by the board of trustees. At first some verses and eulogies are recited, then nine persons are selected by the board of trustees, they wear white and rose-odorous dress.

After completing the said ritual, the shrine's fence is closed, then the collected money is calculated in the presence of the managers. Thereafter, it is given to the bank representative for depositing in the account of the shrine. Recitation of Quran is another ritual held in the beginning of every lunar month.

Yearly rituals: Birth anniversary of Prophet Mohammad is a glorious ceremony held in Imam Zadeh Saleh's shrine on this day, the whole shrine is decorated with green stuffs, coloured ribbons, lights and flowers.

Many wedding ceremonies are also performed on this holy day, many pilgrims who are financially sound, come to the charity institution of the shrine for helping poor people who are getting married. On the death anniversary of

Prophet Mohammad the whole shrine especially its fence (Zarih) are covered with black stuffs. Pilgrims recite Quran and pray for Prophet Muhammad. On the eves of Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha the whole surroundings of the shrine are decorated with flowers, lights and coloured stuffs. *Namaz* is performed collectively on both Eids. On the Eid-ul-Qadeer Khum the whole shrine is decorated, festive ceremonies are held in which a number of people participate. Festive rituals are also held on the birth anniversary of Hazrat Zainab, eulogists recite some eulogies and poems in the commemoration of Hazrat Zainab. In the months of Moharram and Safar the whole shrine is covered with black stuffs, mourning rituals are held. Several mourning groups come to the shrine from different parts of the region to participate in the rituals of Ashura (tenth day of Moharram). In the month of Ramadan recitation of Quran is done after evening prayer in the shrine. One chapter of Quran is recited on each day so the whole of Quran is completed at the end of the fasting month,

There are also other happy ceremonies held on the birth anniversary of Hazrat Fatima and twelve Imams. Several eulogists recite eulogies and happy poems to enhance the happiness.

Rituals are performed by the pilgrims at the shrine who belong to different age, gender and social status. It is very interesting that people belonging to middle and lower class visit in large numbers. People of various countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon and India visit the shrine.

According to the manager of the shrine about 20000 pilgrims visit this place on Thursday, Friday, holidays and ceremonial days. While on other days the number is approximately 15000.

Pilgrims come to the shrine mainly for the pilgrimage and to participate in the rituals and ceremonies held at the shrine like Fatiha, recitation of Quran, *namaz* (prayer) and for participating in the birth anniversaries. These pilgrims are needy and come to get their wish fulfilled through the miraculous power of the saint.

In the present study an attempt has also been made to trace the **similarities and differences** between the shrines of India and Iran in one of the chapters. Some of the similarities are:

Tracing the genealogy of all the four saints under the study, it was found that, it is connected to Hazrat Ali. All these saints had a common purpose of propagating Islam based on Quran, Hadith, tradition, life style, deeds and sayings of Prophet Mohammad.

The shrines have a kitchen or *langar khana* in which cooked food is distributed amongst the pilgrims and poor.

The shrines under the study have different places of residence for the accommodation of employees and Mutawallis. Officers for receiving offers (*nazar*) from the pilgrims are always present in the shrine.

Governmental authorities and the pilgrims expressed their love and veneration towards the saint by donating properties, markets, shops, agricultural lands, orchards and centres for production. Good income is generated and earned from the said properties and from it new properties are bought and production centres are established.

Official matters of the shrines are dealt by a well defined hierarchical administrative system, different aspects of the shrine such as repair works, security, and accounts are controlled by the office of the shrine.

At the shrines of India and Iran everyday congregation prayer takes place. Employees and pilgrims of the shrine comprises the gathering. The shrine is closed at night and all pilgrims leave the premises.

Mourning in the month of Moharram is observed in the shrines of India and Iran respectively. During first ten days of the month lunch and dinner is offered to the people participating in mourning function .

After pilgrimage the pilgrims pay visit to the market for purchasing gifts for friends and relatives. While leaving the shrine they bow their head and do not show their back to the grave.

All shrines observe daily, weekly, monthly and yearly rituals. Pilgrims mainly visit to the shrines for Prayer, *nazar*, reciting Quran, performing Fatiha, they believe in the miraculous power of the saints.

Some of the differences are:

The saints buried in Indian shrines have spiritual tree (Tariqat) but that of Iran do not possess. Most of the saints in Iran have arrived under political refuge against the tyranny of the rulers of the time.

In India the shrine of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti has two cauldrons in which foods for the pilgrims are cooked. It is a unique equipment and no other shrine of India and Iran possess such cauldrons.

All shrines have endowments and properties attached to them in large numbers, yielding them good income. The case with the shrine of Hazrat Abdul Azim is different, the shrine has numerous endowments, as compare to other shrines, income is large. Shrines have facilities like library, Museum, clinic, faculty, various schools and publication centres, endowments and economical activities. Different class of people get benefited from the enrichment of the shrine. Income is strategically multiplied by the officials who look after the shrine.

The pilgrims visiting the shrines of India is comparatively large in number to that of Iran.

Shrines of Iran are taken care by the Mutawallis, these Mutawallis are not related to the saints, they render the services of repairing and expanding the shrine. Women Khadims are only available in the shrines of Iran.

In the shrines of India the pilgrims take off their shoes before entering the shrine, on the specified place. The shoes are looked after by shoe keepers who receive money in return. But in the shrines of Iran the place for taking off the shoes is at the entry gate of the tomb and the shoes are looked after without paying money.

In the shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya the administration is controlled by Sajjada Nashin since their number is large so they take up administrative work

periodically. The turn of one Sajjada Nashin comes after a week. This periodical change results into a new mode of administration every week.

Contrary to it the shrines of Iran has administration controlled by a single unit. A trustee council exist in the shrine of Iran. The members of this council are known as Mutawallis, these Mutawallis discharge the administrative responsibilities and have over all control of the shrines.

The saints under study in India have perform miracles in their life time.

Saints of Iran have not performed miracles in their life time. However, people in general in Iran believe that whatever they achieve through the medium of saints is nothing but a result of the miraculous power of the saints.

It is compulsory for the pilgrims at the shrines of India to cover their heads before entering the shrine but in the shrines of Iran it is not compulsory.

In the last chapter which **concludes** up the study of shrines of India and Iran. Some major points are:

It is worthy to note that some rituals performed by the pilgrims at the shrines are related to pre-Islamic culture and traditions of India and Iran. When Aryans came to India and Iran, they possessed culture and tradition of their own. Reflection of their culture and tradition can be traced in Zoroastrians and Islam in Iran and Hinduism and Islam in India. Through illumination and spread of fragrance Aryans use to invoke gods. Hence lighting ceremony or the illumination at the shrines is essentially a ritual of Aryans which inculcated in the religious practices of India and Iran and thereafter became an essential ritual of the shrines.

The present study delves deep into the life history of the saints of India and Iran investigating course of happenings and circumstances (after the death of saint) which lead to the formation of concrete structure of the shrines. Be it a shrine of India or Iran, the establishment of pilgrimage and the construction of shrine was executed by the disciples and followers of the saints.

Religious aspects of the shrines offer spiritual favour to the society and strengthens it against disintegration. Shrines also provide shelters to those who wish peace and harmony against the onslaught of materialism.

Study of shrines in terms of psychological analysis of the pilgrims reveals the fact that shrines have also wielded influence on the society through individual's psychology.

The most important and significant role of shrines is of cultural, social and economical, they are the meeting point of the people of various class, religion and creeds. When they come at one place to perform the rituals and observe the customs they come closer by lifting the barriers of religious differences.

Study of rituals and ceremonies related to the saints and their tombs are worth from the sociological point of view as the above mentioned activities have religious, psychological, cultural, social and economic dimensions. This study will also explain the importance of shrines as a social institutions which play a significant role in moulding religious and social way of life of a big section of the society.



**SOCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF RELIGIOUS SHRINES:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF INDIA AND IRAN**

THESIS

SUBMITTED FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF

Doctor of Philosophy

IN

SOCIOLOGY

BY

ABDOLREZA ADHAMI

Under the supervision of
DR. NEMAT ALI KHAN



**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK
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2005



T7028

Dedicated
to
My Wife Nuzhat
&
My Children Elham & Ehsan



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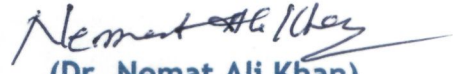
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Certificate

This is to certify that **Mr. Abdolreza Adhami** has completed his research work under my supervision and guidance and that his thesis entitled **“Social Contributions of Religious Shrines: A Comparative Study of India and Iran”** is, in my opinion, suitable for the award of the degree of Ph.D in Sociology of the Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.


(Dr. Nemat Ali Khan)
Supervisor)

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Chapter I
Introduction

Introduction

The main purpose of the study is to analyse critically the sociological dimensions of religion with respect to the shrines of India and Iran. It also deals with the prospects and attribution of religion to the society.

According to Émile Durkheim 'a religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things'.¹ It is an eminently collective phenomenon binding men together.

Religion and religious beliefs inspires human behaviours and culture of a nation. It is shaped according to the customs and traditions and plays an inevitable role in the formation of cultural values. Religious beliefs and observances aim at developing a relationship with super natural power and acts as a medium for the blessing of mankind. Human behaviour is shaped by a relationship between man and supernatural power in such a way that they are interwoven and inseparable.

Religion is essentially a social phenomenon it occurs in a social content and when men celebrate sacred things, they unwittingly celebrate the power of their society. The relationship between man and sacred things is similar to the relationship between man and society. It provides a means of adjusting and attuning to terms with difficult situation in one's life. Through rituals and pilgrimage an individual defends all adversities and it acts as tonic to self confidence.

According to Bronislaw Malinowski 'religion promotes social solidarity by dealing with situations of emotional stress which threaten the stability of society'.²

'Religion is part of the cultural system. Religious beliefs provide guidelines for human action and standards, against which man's conduct can be evaluated'.³

The religious places such as shrines, tombs, and important personalities such as Dargahs, Bibis, Lords, Syed and Imams were established and recognized generally after the spread of Islam in countries like India and Iran.

These places played an important role in forming the culture and beliefs of nations. The religious values relies on the buried saint in the shrine and varies on his/her religious performances. In shrines there are glorious tombs and buildings where sacrifices (Qurbani) and food is offered. The pilgrims seek solution of their problems through the saint and desire to bring favourable conditions for themselves and their families. They also pray at the tombs, pay respect to the saints. These places are considered as cultural, social and religious centres in relation to the societal beliefs, traditions, values and other socio – cultural aspects. This relationship naturally influences the beliefs, traditions and values of a society and of religion. In fact no culture exist in the world in which the religion plays no role.

The shrines reflect the past of each nation. These social and religious places manifest beliefs in an individual. Ceremonies and other religious rituals take place. It is a place for offerings, requests and resort for the sufferers, shelters for the homeless, and remedy for the ill people. These places are not only meant for worshipping and supplications, but also act as centres for social interaction and decision-making.

According to Bronislaw Malinowski 'anxiety and tension tend to disrupt social life. Situations which produce emotions include "crisis of life" such as birth, puberty, marriage and death. Malinowski notes that in all societies these life crises are surrounded with religious ritual'.⁴

Celebrations, mourning and different rituals which are performed in shrines (though have been changed over periods of times), reflect the culture of a nation. These centres however, preserve their religious sanctity, people and the believers consider shrines as religious turning points and paths for connecting themselves to God.

Pilgrimage is essentially a religious phenomenon which connects the material world to the eternal and the pilgrims to his/her religious community.

There are three necessary things for a pilgrimage, namely, sacred place, sacred path, and sacred goal. Shrines in each area coincide with the pilgrims and devotees. This relation and unity maintains the Islamic sacred centres to be a historical element. These places represent the regional history, origin and artistic construction of

the age. There are several references narrated about them, over all, they possess keys to open the blind doors of history.

Islamic shrines like other religious places control and cure various psychological diseases. Human beings in their life may become depressed and mentally tense, therefore, worshipping and pilgrimage to the shrines could give them solace.

Religious beliefs are such a kind of phenomenon through which one can release from mental problem. Therefore, the psychological functions of shrines offer an influential capacity which are regarded as the final resort for the oppressed belonging to all religions and cultures.

When man faces a large number of difficulties and obstacles in his/her life, she/he prays and hold fasts consequently her/his life will witnesses a change and he/she becomes a devotee of the saint, in particular and of God in general.⁵

The existence of shrines and sacred places in an area constitutes a large gathering of pilgrims bringing economical gain to the areas by means of expenses, gifts or offerings purchased by pilgrims.

Shrines have also played an important role in the establishment and regulation of social laws. The social validity of these places can be recognized through the different sections/parts of society and their relations in the society. Similarly the social and urban development of

an area is influenced by the regional shrines due to their spiritual, religious and social rank. Their centralities affects the economy, triggers social activities, provides employment etc, in the locations.

Shrines are also considered as a shelter for the poor and oppressed, it is reflected through the behaviours and customs such as camping, holding fast and beseeching performed by pilgrims.

As far as religion is concerned it always influences the culture and vice versa. The countries where Islam endeavoured to bring change in the culture were primarily based on religious ideologies. Religion usually causes deletion of a cultural value or its modification.

Shrines, which came into existence through Islamic influence, manifest cultural values, traditions and beliefs among pilgrims. Due to the close affinity among the pilgrims visiting the shrines a strong cultural bond and relationship is formed.

Therefore, it is clear that all the above discussions results in the unity and homogeneity among the members of the society. Religion and faithfulness can be considered as effective factors in maintaining consistency of an individual in a society.

Religion enhances and forms relationship among the members of different societies. Since the values necessary for the fundamental structure of societal systems are common among all religions, societal values are easily maintained.

The fact that religion is capable to increase the consistency among the worshippers of the society mean that if the religious values are not of great importance among the members, they could act as a potential factor for inconsistency and bewilderment of societal relationship. The religious values function properly only if they are learned and used, that is to have appropriate positive functions.⁶

The present study aims at analysing the sociological aspects of shrines. The sociology of a religion is to be analysed and it is of great importance due to the fact that it is impossible to find a society in which there is no trace of religion and the people do not believe in God.

This branch of sociology in which the religious organizations and rituals are taken into consideration, focuses on the religious relationship as well as the changes in cultural structure and religious norms. On the other hand, the relationship between culture, religion and society are investigated in the present study.

In the present study the following aspects is highlighted and brought under discussion:

The individual and historical significance of the saints and their shrines, its building, halls and different location and parts associated with their comprehensive functions.

Employees attached to the shrines such as Khadims etc and services like banks, restaurant, taxi service, hotel, museum and

libraries are investigated. Employees of the shrine are directly and indirectly associated. The system of shrine, rituals and other ceremonies performed in the shrine is taken under investigation, and lastly the importance of the shrine and its impact on society and individuals and its functions such as religious, psychological, cultural, social and economical services rendered by the shrine have been taken into account.

Importance of the study

Every research work has its own importance. An intensive study requires deep involvement, logical approach, and objective analysis in such a way that all the aspects of research are covered with clear perspective and positive conclusion.

The present study will be conducted with the above mentioned approach in order to bring to light the validity and relevance of the work for the society from social and religious point of view.

Religious aspects: In Islamic world shrines are regarded as pious places where God's blessings are showered and spiritual satisfactions are attained. These shrines offer spiritual favour to the society and strengthens it against disintegration. Shrines also provide shelters to those who wish peace and harmony against the onslaught of materialism. Pilgrims resort to shrines during *Urs* and other ceremonies to come closer to God. They express devotion based on their relations with the saints.

They perform prayers and also hold fast fence (Zarih) at the shrine to purify their inner-self and faith. This act of devotion expressed by the pilgrims brings them closer to each other spiritually and ideologically.

Psychological aspects: Needy pilgrims come in large numbers to the shrines, to fulfill their wishes from the God through the medium of the saints. They show reverence to their saints for attaining their goals. They put their requests to saint in the form of written petitions on a piece of paper or by tying strings on the fences or trees. They believe that through the intercession of saints, God will bestow his blessings upon them. They also hold the belief that by showing reverence to saints they are showered with bliss in this material world. This belief gives pilgrims a psychological strength and they feel that in adversities they are secure and protected by the superpower which helps them through the medium of saints. It enables them to develop a sense of confidence in undertaking difficult tasks and facing hardships.

Study of shrines in terms of psychological analysis of the pilgrims reveals the fact that shrines have also wielded influence on the society through individual's psychology.

Cultural, social and economy aspects: The most important and significant role of shrines is that they are the meeting point of the people of various classes, religion and creeds. When they come at one place to perform the rituals and observe the customs they come closer by lifting the barriers of religious differences. They exchange views

and reciprocate ideas. This kind of meeting and closeness results into cultural and social bonding. Shrine renders social services through different institution like library, clinical centres, school and charity houses.

This casual contact during the visit to shrine sometimes turns into a permanent and longer relation either by the way of matrimonial relationships or by the way of other social and economic activities like trade and commerce. Shrines are also the centres of generating economy. Gifts and presents are offered by the pilgrims in the form of cash which provides subsistence to the Khadims of the shrines. During the period of *Urs* income is also generated by levying taxes on the visitors. This income goes to the government exchequer and to the local bodies which is spent on the development of the city and expansion of the area where the shrine lies.

Study of customs, ceremonies and rituals related to the saints and their tombs are worth from the sociological point of view as the above mentioned activities have religious, psychological, cultural, social and economic dimensions. A critical and evaluative study of these dimensions of shrines will bring forth the services which they have rendered to the society. This study will also explain the importance of shrines as a social institutions which play a significant role in moulding religious and social way of life of a big section of the society.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the present study are as follows:

1. The study aims at analysing various aspects of shrines such as its origin, history and its sociological contribution.
2. To study rituals and ceremonies performed in the shrines, as well as recognition of religious, psychological, cultural, social and economical aspects.
3. To study the beliefs and attitude of the pilgrims while visiting the shrines. Religious, psychological, cultural, social and economical significance and contribution of the shrines, will also be taken under the study.
4. To recognize the effect on the life of the believers with relation to the role and function offered by the shrines.
5. An attempt is made to compare and contrast the above mentioned aspects of the shrines of India and Iran respectively and to trace the similarities and differences between the two.
6. An attempt is made to conclude and find out various aspects and affairs of the shrine and its functions.

Methodology

The methodology of this work is primarily based on the secondary resources and observation of the physical features of the shrine. The observation is through participation. Field work includes studying the behaviours of pilgrims, rituals and ceremonies performed

by them as well as by the permanent and casual employees of the shrines. Interviews of Mutawallis (incharge), Khadims, descendants of the saints and the pilgrims of the shrine was taken. Interview is mainly about the purpose of visit and degree of devotion of pilgrims and employees of the shrine for the saint. It also includes to study the purpose of performing ritual by the pilgrims, Khadims, employees and Mutawallis. Photography of the buildings, parts and functioning of the shrine is done to present a clear and visual pictures of the field work.

Study under Investigation

There are several Islamic shrines and tombs in India and Iran. In this study an attempt is being made to investigate some eminent shrines, their pivotal roles, significance and importance in the society as well as concern of the people and believers. Accordingly two Islamic shrines in India, namely Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti's shrine in Ajmer and Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya's shrine in Delhi and two Islamic shrines in Iran accordingly Hazrat Abdul Azim Hasani's shrine in Ray (Tehran) and Hazrat Imamzadeh Saleh's shrine in the north of Tehran are taken under the study.

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Chapter II

Shrines of India

- I. *Shrine of Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti*
- II. *Shrine of Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya*

1. *Shrine of Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti*

History of Sufism in India

Sufism in Islam is the outgrowth of mystic speculation and it is rooted in the Quran and the Sunna. It is both a way of life and a doctrine. In an attempt to inculcate religious spirit and make people aware of the spiritual dimension of life, the followers of early Sufism organized themselves into separate fraternities (Silsilahs), named them after their inceptors and instructed their disciples (Murids) in their hospices in exoteric and esoteric sciences. The adoption of spiritual exercises and practices not prevalent in early Islam by certain Sufi, aroused the fury of Ulema (orthodox) to condemn Sufi's as heretics and demanded their suppression. In face of severe opposition, the representative Sufis, adept in Islamic sciences modeled their life in conformity with Islam Sharia (common law). They also professed that their mission was to sustain contact with the original experiences of the Prophet and prevent Muslims from turning wholly materialistic. Sincere devotion to God and service to mankind made them look exemplars of piety and upholder of the ideal of Islamic egalitarianism. They did not accomplished a high degree of reconciliation between spiritual and worldly life. Consequently, Sufism as the embodiment of emotional religion, became a wide spread movement under the leadership of Shaikh Junaid Baghdadi (10th Century A.D.), the exponent of sober genre of Sufism. Therefore, all those to whom spirituality was a genuine concern, identified the service of man with the divine worship and presented Islam as a gift to the world. Though

mystic traditions became popular among the followers of other religions of the world, yet their representatives generally turned with themselves, cutting off relation with the mundane world for their spiritual progress.

It is also noteworthy that the Sufis of Persian speaking lands of Iran and central Asia known as Ajam were influenced by their regional environment in which they had adopted certain ascetic exercises that were at variance with the orthodox of Sufis of Arab lands, called Maghrib. Consequently two Sufi traditions developed simultaneously viz., Maghrib's and Ajami traditions. The Sufis who introduced different Silsilahs (fraternities) in India came from central Asia and Khurasan and represented generally the Ajami tradition of Sufism. Of the early Sufis, only Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya(d.1262) of Multan who belonged to the Suhrawardi Silsilah represented the Maghribi tradition. Unlike him, the Chishti Sufis, who came from Khurasan and central Asia represented the Maghribi tradition as the element of syncretic Sufism, discernible in their teachings and practices. The shrines of the early two Chishtis, Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (d.1236) who lies buried in Ajmer and Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya (d.1325) who lies buried in Delhi.



Fig. 1: Shrine of Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti



Fig. 2: Grave of Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti

Shajra-i-Nasabi of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (R.A)

Hazrat Ali-Ibn-Abu Talib (Karam ullah-o-Wajho)

Hazrat Imam Husain (R.A)

Hazrat Imam Zainul Abidin (R.A)

Hazrat Imam Mohummad Baqar (R.A)

Hazrat Imam Jafar Sadiq (R.A)

Hazrat Imam Moosa Kazim (R.A)

Hazrat Imam Ali Reza (R.A)

Hazrat Syed Ibraheem (R.A)

Hazrat Syed Abdul Aziz (R.A)

Hazrat Syed Tahir Husain (R.A)

Hazrat Syed Ahmad Husain (R.A)

Hazrat Syed Kamalluddin (R.A)

Hazrat Syed Gayassuddin (R.A)

Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti (R.A)¹

Shajra-i-Chishtiyah

**(Spiritual Tree of Chishti Order) of
Khwaja Syed Moinuddin Hasan Chishti (R.A)**

Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W.)

Imam-ul-Auliya Syedna Hazrat Ali (R.A)

Hazrat Khwaja Hasan Basri (R.A)

Hazrat Khwaja Wahid Bin Zaid (R.A)

Hazrat Khwaja Fuzail Bin Ayaz (R.A)

Hazrat Khwaja Ibrahim Bin Adham Balkhai (R.A)

Hazrat Khwaja Sadeed-ud-din Huzaifa Al-Mar-ashi (R.A)

Hazrat Khwaja Amin-ud-din Hubera Basri (R.A)

Hazrat Khwaja Mumshad Ali Denoori (R.A)

Hazrat Khwaja Abu Ishaq Chishti (R.A)

Hazrat Khwaja Abdal Abi Ahmad (R.A)

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Hazrat Khwaja Qutb-ud-Din audud Chishti (R.A)

Hazrat Khwaja Haji Sharif Zandani (R.A)

Hazrat Khwaja Usman Harvani (R.A)

Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (R.A)²

Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti

'Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti was born in Sijistan (Sistan) and brought up in Khurasan (Iran). His father, Khwaja Ghiyasuddin Hasan, was a most pious and God fearing man. When he died the Khwaja was fifteen years old. The Khwaja lived on the earnings from a garden and a water-mill, inherited from his father. One day, while working in the garden, a Majzub (ecstatic) named Ibrahim Qunduzi passed by. The Khwaja, kissing his hands, offered the Majzub a seat under the trees, while placing before him a bunch of grapes. The Majzub took out some sesame seeds, chewed them and put them in Moinuddin's mouth. This aroused in him a great spiritual illumination. After a few days Moinuddin sold his possessions and distributed the money amongst the local dervishes. For many years he lived in Samarqand and Bukhara, learning the Quran and studying theology. From there he travelled to Harwan, a suburb of Nishapur, where under Shaikh Usman Harwani, he practiced rigorous austerities for about two and a half years. The Shaikh was highly impressed and gave Moinuddin a Khirqa, appointing him his Khalifa. The Khwaja set off for Baghdad and reaching Sanjan, met Shaikh Nizamuddin Kubra. He lived with the Shaikh for a short period, then moved to Jil where he stayed with Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani for eight weeks. The Khwaja's next long stay was at Baghdad, a week's journey from Jil. There he kept company with such Sufi saints as Shaikh Ziyauddin, the uncle and teacher of

Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi, Shaikh Auhaduddin kirmani and Shaikh Shihabuddin himself'.³

'From Baghdad the Khwaja returned to Hamadan where he met Shaikh Yusuf Hamadani. From there he went to Tabriz and saw Shaikh Abu Sa'id Tabrizi, the teacher of Shaikh Jalaluddin Tabrizi. Then he went to Mayhana and Kharagan and visited the tombs of Shaikh Abu Sa'idin Abi'l Khair and Shaikh Abu'l Hasan Kharagani. The Khwaja remained for about two years in that region, and then travelled to Astarabad where he visited the tomb of Shaikh Nasiruddin Astarabadi. From there he went to Herat where he lived near the tomb of Khwaja Abdullah Ansari. Refusing to remain in one place, the Khwaja accompanied by a servant, wandered throughout the area surrounding Herat. His fame attracted a large number of people. Though he disapproved of such popularity and fame, and left for Sabzwar, where he converted the local Shi'i governor, Mohammad Yadgar, to Sunni orthodoxy. After some time, accompanied by Mohammad Yadgar, the Khwaja reached Hisar Shadman. Leaving Yadgar at Hisar Shadman, the Khwaja travelled to Balkh. There he miraculously converted Maulana Ziyauddin Hakim to Sufism'.⁴

'Meanwhile, Muizzuddin Mohammad bin Sam had conquered Delhi and, departing for Ghazni, left his favourite slave, Qutubuddin Aibak, as head of his forces in the occupied city. On route to Ghazni, Sultan Muizzuddin died. The Khwaja left Lahore for Delhi where he

remained for some months. During this period he stayed at a place which is now marked by the grave of Shaikh Rashid Makki. Traces still remain of the arch of the Khwaja's mosque'.⁵

After finally settling at Ajmer, Khwaja Moinuddin, who until then had been celibate, took two wives. According to tradition he decided to marry in order to imitate all the Prophet's practices.⁶ A few years after his arrival at Ajmer, he married the daughter of Syed Wajihuddin, a brother of Syed Husain Mashhadi. Ghausi Shattari's statement that the Khwaja and his wife lived together for twenty seven years, would seem to be reinforced by circumstantial evidence. The wedding seems to have taken place in 606 A.H. The Khwaja's second wife was a daughter of a local Hindu chieftain who had been seized in war. Both are said to have born the Khwaja children.⁷

Works of Khwaja Moinuddin: Khwaja Moinuddin has left some work to the posteriori, two amongst them are well known:

Anisul Arwa (Anise Doulat): This book is a collection of the sayings of his spiritual guide Khwaja Usman Harwani. The book contains twenty eight *majalis* (sittings) and deals with the orders of the Imam, prayers (*maulajat*), duties of women etc.

Ganjul Asrar: The author completed the book in twenty two years of his journey. It is divided into twenty five chapters and deals with different religious aspects for example necessity of the knowledge of

Tariqat, apparent and inherent cleanliness, devotion and exploration of the secrets.⁸

History of the Shrine

The city of Ajmer is situated along the trade route linking Delhi with Gujarat. It falls at the west of India almost 235 km from Delhi. It is branded as the oldest city of India.

Khwaja's parents were the descendants of fourth caliph of Islam Hazrat Ali. Khwaja arrived in the city of Ajmer at the age of 52 around 1191. He got settled at Ajmer before the establishment of Muslim rule in India. At that time Ajmer was ruled by a famous Rajput king Prithvi Raj Chauhan. Khwaja gained popularity in very less time and devoted himself in giving divine teaching to his disciples, he also worked for the remedies and social hurdles of the local people. People of Ajmer were so impressed by his teachings and spiritual excellence that they began to embrace Islam.

Preaching the gospel of Islam remarkably Khwaja devoted his entire life for the spiritual healing of his disciples. Attracted by the spiritual fame and glory of Khwaja, Shahabuddin Ghorî came to seek blessings of former, after he defeated Prithvi Raj in the famous battle of Tarain. Khwaja's noble and sacred mission of spiritual guidance gave comfort and benefited many people. He died on 16th March 1236, at the old age of 97 and was buried in the place where he lived and gave teachings. Presently the shrine of Ajmer is popularly known

as Dargah Sharif of Gharib Nawaz. 'The shrine has assumed an important position in the religious annals of the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent and emerged as a great centre of spiritual activity for all seekers after truth'.⁹ Khwaja's personality has been regarded by large numbers of people as exemplars of piety and spiritual excellence. People of different religion, caste and creeds come for offerings at the shrine, and are filled with a spirit of faith and devotion. The shrine thus plays an important socio-religious role, and has done since early medieval times.

The shrine of Khwaja is located to the south west of Ajmer. Historical evidence reveals that original grave was of small bricks, later a stone cenotaph was built over it, leaving the brick construction intact. Khwaja Husain Nagori built a tomb over the grave.

Internal part of the tomb is made up of marble and externally it is supported by bricks. Golden artistry at the internal part of the tomb was financially supported by Nawab Mushtaq Ali Khan of Rampur state. The roof of the sepulcher has velvet decoration. One can observe the golden balls hanging inside the tomb. The shrine has a talisman hung and Yakute-Rehmani is enameled. On the gate of the enclosure, there is an inscription of a couplet written in golden letters, which was presented by the Nizam of Hyderabad Deccan. Maharaja Jai Singh II of Jaipur presented Jhahjri. There are velvet curtains with

Quranic verses and Persian inscriptions on the northwest walls of the shrine.

These inscriptions indicate the embellishment in 1532. One of the curtains was brought from the holy Kaaba in Mecca. Nawab Kalbey Ali Khan of Rampur state and Nawab Ibrahim Ali Khan of Tonk (Rajsthan) gifted costly cloth covering for the internal structure of the Tomb. An old manuscript of Quran is kept in a silver box on a wooden table, at *mehrab*. It was gifted by Nizam of Hyderabad. Pilgrims of the shrine pay reverence by kissing it.

Physical Description of the Shrine

Usmani gate or Nizam gate: It is the main gate of the shrine, it was constructed by Mir Osman Ali Khan, Nizam of Hyderabad Deccan in 1911. Foreign and local visitors enter the shrine through this gate. Officials and the Khadims of the shrine are available to lead and guide the visitors for offerings and performing rituals. A big market is placed beside the gate, where visitors can purchase sugar plums, candles, fragrance sticks and flowers for the shrine.

Shah Jahan gate or Kalma Darwaza: The gate lies after Nizam gate. Shah Jahan, Mughal emperor in 1644, built it. It was the main gate of the shrine, before Nizam gate was built. The gate bears the inscription of Kalma. Two huge beating drums are kept, above the gate. In between Nizam gate and Shah Jahan gate there is an open portion where there are rooms for the accommodation of the pilgrims.

Buland Darwaza: It was constructed near the tomb by Sultan Mahmood Khalji in 1455. Twenty five cannon guns salute is given at the time of *Urs* flag hoisting ceremony as well as after the new moon of Rajab is sighted. It marks the beginning of six day *Urs* held annually to commemorate the death anniversary of the Sufi saint. No where else in the country cannon guns are fired for a religious purpose.

Shah Jahan mosque: This mosque is made up of white marble located in the tomb complex. It was constructed by Shah Jahan and added a gateway.

Cauldrons (Degs): There are two cauldrons of different size, the big cauldron was gifted by emperor Akbar, a devotee of Khwaja. When Akbar became victorious in the battle of Chittor in 1567, he made a pilgrimage to Ajmer on March 6th, 1568 to pay homage and tribute to Khwaja on whose blessing he succeeded. On this occasion he presented to Khanqah a huge cauldron in which nearly 4800 kgs of food can be cooked at a time sufficient for more than 5000 people. Initially the food mixed with meat was cooked but 'when Ajmer came under the control of the Marathas and Rajputs, a new kind of food known as *Kesaria-bhat* (saffron sweet rice) was cooked in these cauldrons and that has continued to this day'.¹⁰ Mughal emperor Jahangir presented another small cauldron in 1613, it has the capacity of cooking 2400 kgs of food. The food which is cooked in these

cauldrons are distributed among the pilgrims, poor and the Khadims of the shrine (Fig. 3 & 4).

Akbari mosque: It is named after Mughal emperor Akbar. It was build by emperor Akbar. In February 1570, Akbar reached Ajmer by foot from Agra to offer thanks on the birth of son Saleem after he prayed to Khwaja while visiting earlier at the shrine.

Mahfil Khana: This hall or auditorium was constructed by Nawab Bashir-ud-Doula of Deccan in 1891, with regards to pay homage and offer thanks to Khwaja after the Nawab was blessed by a son. Initially it was an open area. During *Urs* tents are placed for gathering. Presently there is a Dalan (courtyard) which was built by Mir Hafiz Ali, a Mutawalli of the shrine.

Khanqah: In 1570, Khanqah was built, near Mahfil Khana, its entrance is from the West wall of Mahfil Khana. The place assumes a greater importance as Khwaja was given funeral bath when he died.

Langar Khana (free kitchen): It is a reserved place for cooking and distributing foods among the beggars, poors and pilgrims, everyday. There is a gate of *langar khana*, after passing it, there is an open space. A big pan is kept for cooking barley. In the open space of *langar khana*, an old umbrella (Chattri) is kept (Fig. 5).

Jannati Darwaza (gateway to heaven): It is also known as Makki gate. The beautifully engraved silver doors of Jannati Darwaza are

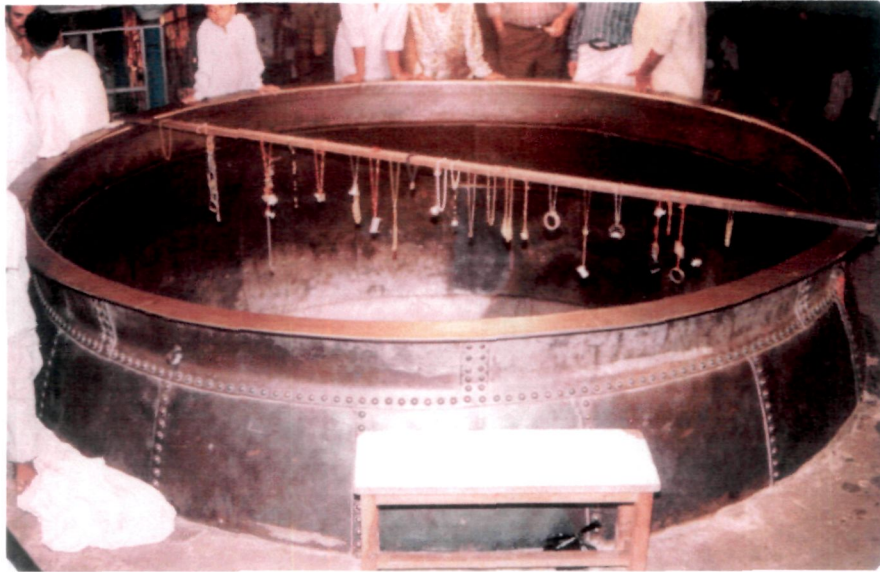


Fig. 3: Big cauldron (Deg)



Fig. 4: Small cauldron (Deg)

exclusively opened on four occasions every year. The doors are opened for both Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha for six days during the *Urs* as well as on the occasion of the *Urs* of Khwaja Usman Harwani, Pir (teacher) of Khwaja Gharib Nawaz. It is a popular belief that if one passes through the gates of Jannati Darwaza, he or she is guaranteed a berth in heaven, and if anyone passes through Jannati Darwaza seven consecutive times, it is equivalent to having done Haj.

Aulia mosque: The mosque is made up of white marble. It is only used for reciting verses of holy Quran and thanks giving prayers by the pilgrims and visitors. The place has its importance as Khwaja on his arrival to Ajmer stayed for a few days. Thus it has been turned into a mosque.

Alamgiri mosque: It is adjacent to the main gate. It was originally built by Sultan Mahmood Khalji but later Mughal emperor reconstructed it. The splendour of the mosque is enhanced by the golden decoration and artistry.

Begami Dalan: It is located at the eastern main entrance of the shrine. It was constructed by Jahan Ara the daughter of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan.

Ahata-e-Noor: It is a place where almost all the religious functions are held and observed by the Khadims. The large courtyard around this hall is reserved for organizing *qawwali* sessions and *milad sharif*.

Jhalra: It is a water resevoire, located at the south of the shrine. Water for *langar khana* and cauldrons is supplied from it. A majority of residents around the premises of the shrine also take water from it.

Jama Masjid Hauz: It is a water tank used by the pilgrims to perform *wazu* (ablution before prayer) for offering *namaz* or prayer.

Shahee gate: It lies between the Jhalra and Jama Masjid Hauz. It has a grave of Khwaja Abu Saeed, son of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti.

Chattri Darwaza: It is a gate located at the south of shrine. It is closed after evening prayer but the windows are kept open. The gate is exclusively opened for the whole night during the days of *Urs* celebrations or in a situation when a relative of a Khadim dies.

Khirkee Darwaza: It has small rooms on both sides. The gate is generally closed after 6.PM but exclusively kept open for the whole night during *Urs*.

Hameedia Dalan: It lies between Begami Dalan and Khirkee Darwaza. It was constructed by a Khadim named Syed Abdul Hamid. It has rooms for accommodating pilgrims during *Urs*.

Arcot Dalan: It is a small hall on the southern side of the shrine, it was constructed by Nawab Mohammad Ali of Arcot around 1800 for the comfort of the pilgrims. It is used for observing death rituals of Khadim community.

The shrine has been the centre of all religious and social activities since ages. It has also been the source of spiritual inspiration and moral strength for human beings. Mughal emperors distributed generous gifts to all connected with the tomb, they lavishly granted money and free grants to the Khadims. The functioning of the shrine has always been looked after and taken care by Khadim community and Mutawallis. The term Mutawalli is applied for the superintendent of a religious and charitable place.

Society run by Anjuman Syed Zadgan : Khadim community runs a society named, Syed Zadgan. It has its elected representatives working on different posts. Each and every office bearers of the society are directly or indirectly associated with the functioning and management of the shrine. The society runs a senior secondary school in which 950 students are studying at present. It also runs a Islamic school, besides providing educational scholarships. It has also constructed a modern school for girls, a nursing home, three guest houses for the accommodation of pilgrims. It provides monthly fixed monetary help to widows.

Endowment of the shrine: There are several shops in the premises of the shrine. These shops are given on rent by the trust run by officials of the shrine. Flowers, sugar plums, embroidery cloth sheets for offering at the shrine, prayer sheets, fragrance sticks, photographs of

the shrine, books on Khwaja, Quran and other religious books are sold in these shops (Fig. 6).

Officials and Important Functionaries Related to the Shrine

They are divided into two groups:

1. Directly 2. Indirectly

1. Directly: They rely on the shrine occupationally and financially and are considered as permanent employees of the shrine. They receive wages in the form of salaries from the shrine every month.
2. Indirectly: These people are totally dependant on the resources by visiting pilgrims.

Those who rely on the shrine directly include:

Sajjada Nashins: The term Sajjada Nashin is applied to and used exclusively for a disciple, who was appointed as a successor by the spiritual mentor. He was ought to carry organization of Silsilah (sect) after the saint. Historical evidence betrays that great Sufi or saints did not appointed anyone as the successor or Sajjada Nashin. Thus the sons, descendants and relatives of the saints claimed to be the successor. At the shrine of Ajmer they are available in large numbers. While performing rituals at the shrine a group of pilgrims accompany one of the Sajjada Nashin and they move towards the tomb of Khwaja. Pilgrim's hold firm belief that prayer done by Sajjada Nashin on their behalf would bring them easy favour and blessings of Khwaja. Thus



Fig. 5: Beggars waiting for food in front of Langar Khana (free kitchen)



Fig. 6: Endowment shops

their needs and wishes would be fulfilled. They feel proud for giving *nazar* (gift) to Sajjada Nashin.

Mutawallis: They are the trustee and custodian of a religious and charitable place. At Ajmer they deal with the land grants, look after the entire establishment of the shrine. They ensure regular payment of salaries of employees. They also maintain daily records of income and expenditure. They are also in charge of the *langar khana* (free kitchen) and ensure its proper functioning.

Khadims: Khadims of Khwaja's shrine are known as Syed Zadgan they are descendents of Khwaja. Besides organizing religious ceremonies they extend their help to the pilgrims visiting the shrine, in terms of providing accommodation and guidance. Khadims had displayed their loyalty and devotion to the shrine as in the days of partition and communal riots, they protected the shrine from plunder and destruction. They also pray on behalf of those who are unable to visit the shrine due to their personal reasons as they have faith in Khwaja and are desirous of obtaining his blessings. Khadims have right to perform rituals, arrange spiritual functions and to receive all kinds of *nazar* (gifts) hereditary and judicially.

Those who rely on the shrine indirectly include:

Dua Navees (writer of prayer): There are number of Dua Navees present at the shrine in order to help the pilgrims, these pilgrims approach them for solving their problems. They give Dua in writing and

explain how to use it. Pilgrims feel certain satisfaction and give money to Dua Navees (Fig. 7).

Fatiha Khwans: They are available permanently at the shrine, enjoying the privilege hereditarily. Pilgrims pay homage to Khwaja by asking these Fatiha Khwans to pray on their behalf.

Malud Khwans: Several of them can be seen, sitting in the premises of the shrine. They recite hymns in praise of Khwaja.

Qawwals: They are always present at the shrine, they are highly devoted towards Khwaja and sing hymn with musical instruments. Pilgrims listen with utter devotion and reverence. Some pilgrims appear to be in a trance like condition. They give money to the *qawwals*.

Shoe keepers: There are several shoe keepers sitting at the path of market and also near to the doors of the shrine. Their work is to look after the shoes of pilgrims against the payment (Fig. 8).

Beggars: Men, women, children and physically challenged are seen sitting and moving on streets near the shrine and in the market outside the shrine. Pilgrims give them money and arrange food from the hotel in order to gain favour (*sawab*).

Markets: They sell fragrance sticks, flowers, candles, clothes, sugar plums, etc to the pilgrims, which are used for praying and offering *nazar* at the shrine. The shops in the premises as well as outside the premises of the shrine are in large numbers. The shop keepers are of different order, some sell material for offering, some sell household



Fig. 7: Dua Navees (writer of prayer)



Fig. 8: Shoe keeper

commodities and contractors for supplying food material to the hotels and restaurants (Fig. 9).

Vendors: There are many vendors in the vicinity of the shrine. They sell shoes, decoratives, baskets, candles, fragrance sticks, bags, clothes, jewelleries, flowers etc.

Another group which relies on the shrine indirectly: Several buildings, religious schools, hotels, restaurants and government offices have come up surrounding the shrine and adding to the economic prosperity of the town.

Administration of the Shrine

Administration and control of the shrine of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti in India, is different from other shrines. The system has eight government appointed officials and twenty four members comprise from the Anjuman Syed Zadgan. These officials control the administrative system of the shrine. The members of *waqf* board operate under an appointed Nazim of government. Several boxes are kept by the *waqf* board, in which the pilgrims put cash, gift as offering or *nazar*. When the box is filled, it is opened and the money accumulated is counted. The income is used for the repair work, expansion of the shrine and charity for the poor and needy people.

The members of Anjuman Syed Zadgan receive gift in the form of cash individually from pilgrims and the money is utilized for the functioning of shrine, day to day expenses and for purposes like

celebration of annual *Urs*, *mahfil zikr*, observance of Moharram, Eid-Milad-un-Nabi, scholarship to orphans, needy and poor students. Expenses for running several schools and religious institutions are also met by the money. Pilgrims on the request of the officials express their devotion towards saints by constructing rooms and extension of the shrine. In short the administration and functions of the shrine is controlled by the Anjuman Syed Zadgan and members of the *waqf* board.

Rituals and Ceremonies of the Shrine

Rituals and ceremonies of the shrine were developed under the control and patronages of Rajputs, Mughals and Maratha rulers. In a return it generated an atmosphere of mutual understanding and social bonding among the people of different religions. It gave stimulus to the growth of cultural affinity and cordial relationship between Hindus and Muslims, various systems such as *haft chauki* (seven groups), *kalid-bardari* (key keeping) are based on Mughal arrangements. Performance of *qawwalis* and different parties including India and Pakistan, gatherings during *Urs* and on every Thursday night, the use of *dal badal* (special tent) over the heads of dignitaries, the services of *mashalchis* (torch bearers), *chobdars* (macebearers) are found dressed in typical Mughal costumes. These costumes and clothes were borrowed from Mughal courts and the custom of wearing such clothes still prevails. Deep-rooted influence of the culture of Mughals

on the affairs of the shrine is very much evident by the use of terms and vocabulary in the daily work routine such as *bangla* (tying of floral net around shrine), *tosha-khana* (store room), *nima* cover (for inner cloth-sheet), *ghulam gardish* (covered passage for attendants), *chanwar* and *farrashas* (sweeps made of peacock feathers).

Rituals and ceremonies at the shrine can be categorically divided into, daily, weekly, monthly, yearly rituals and final day ceremonies. The rituals and practices are laid down in the constitution of the shrine and thus form an essential part of the reality of the shrine. They are carried out unconditionally and without alterations. Some of the rituals may be traced to the period of the early Chishti saints, while others were introduced by the Mughals. A few reflect local traditions and cultural influence.

Daily rituals: Everyday three important rituals are performed at the shrine. *Khidmat* (service), illumination (*roshni*), *karka* (closing of the main doors of the shrine).

Khidmat (service) is performed twice a day. It is exclusive privilege of Khadims. The first routine service is done before dawn. Main tomb is opened by a Khadim and one of the elderly Khadim gives the call for prayer, he also performs *taslim* and *salam* to honour Khwaja. Candles are lit in the tomb. Then one of the elderly Khadim moves towards the inner circle of the tomb and removes the floral garland known as *sej* from the grave. Floral garland is put in a large

basket covered with cloth. The basket is carried to the nearby tomb of Bibi Hafiz Jamal, it is placed on her grave and then it is cleaned. Two or three Khadims move towards the inner railings of the tomb and raise the cover (*ghilaf*) and cloth sheets (*nimas*) from all sides equally and put these on the stone structure of the grave. Khadims then start sweeping flowers from both sides of the grave. Khadims take these flowers and distribute them among pilgrims. After the proper cleaning of tomb from all sides, Khadims recite the prayer (Fatiha) and invoke the blessings of the almighty in name of Khwaja and place the cloth sheet back on the grave. Fresh floral garland (*sej*) is put on the grave and atar (perfume) is sprinkled on it. The doors are open, during the course of this cleaning no one except Khadims are allowed to enter inside tomb. At about 3 PM service of cleaning is done with the same process as of morning. The upper portion of the grave is pasted with *Sandal*. The whole process of service ends in an hour.

Pilgrims are allowed to enter the shrine to pay homage recite prayer (Fatiha), offer cloth sheets (*chadar*) and flowers. They are guided by Khadims who also recite Fatiha, pray for them, place a portion of cloth on the head of the pilgrims and help in offering flowers. All pilgrims give cash (*nazar*) to Khadims for this services. Some of the Khadims sit at the doorsteps of the tomb in a hope of cash offerings.

At dusk the inner chamber of the tomb is illuminated. Lightening (*roshni*) ceremony is one of the traditional ritual of not only Ajmer's

shrine but of all the shrines of India. It is done everyday before the evening prayer. The ceremony is done in many phases, firstly fragrance sticks and aloe-wood (*ud*) is brought and placed by a Khadim in the middle of the outer railing of the sepulcher. Four big candles are also kept in a corner and near to fragrance sticks. Three Khadims with candles in their hands start walking from a place near *langar khana* where specially prepared candles are kept. As they walk the drum is beaten. They are received by the pilgrims who stand in two rows. Passing through the sandal mosque, Khadims holding candles enter the shrine through the eastern door, they recite verses in praise of Khwaja (probably initiated by Shaikh Hussain Nagori a well known saint of the early fifteenth century). In this ceremony pilgrims are allowed to join Khadims.

A huge crowd gathers, all male pilgrims are allowed to attend the ceremony. Khadims light the candles in their hands and few candles are passed to the candle maker, who puts them on the fixed silver candle stands on the railing, around the tomb. Khadims put the candles on their heads and recite prayer. The four candles are then put to the respective corners. It is then moved and passed to the women pilgrims who have assembled in the courtyard near the shrine of Bibi Hafiz Jamal, daughter of Khwaja. The candles are fixed at the shrine of Bibi, and then women are allowed to enter the tomb of Khwaja. With this the *roshni* ceremony ends (Fig. 10).



Fig. 9: Market



Fig. 10: Illumination ritual (Roshni ritual)

Closing of the doors of the shrine at night takes place between 9:30 / 10:30 P.M. except the inner part of the first railing, the whole tomb is cleaned by three Khadims with *farrashas*. Pilgrims are not allowed to enter the tomb, they stand outside in two rows. While Khadims are engaged in sweeping and cleaning the floor of the shrine in the courtyard, a group of *qawwals* sing hymns the custom is followed since the days of Mughal rule. When the last Khadim comes out with the *farrasha* in his hand, the *ghariyali* (timekeeper) loudly announces that six *gharis* (each *ghari* of a duration of twenty four minutes in the medieval times) have passed. The *qawwals* then start reciting *karka* verses in *Bhojpuri* and a local dialect. After that the doors of the shrine are closed, people perform *taslim*, and the ceremony comes to an end. Other than these rituals *naubat* is played twice a day, in the morning and at sunset *langar khana* is opened and free meal consisting soup of barley is distributed twice after noon prayers, among the pilgrims and general public.

Weekly rituals: On the eve of every night between Thursday and Friday a special gathering is organized in the eastern courtyard called Ahata-e-Noor. In front of the shrine special seating arrangements in the form of the cushions (*gadela*) is done for Diwan, Mutawalli and other important officers, while for the general public and pilgrims a sheet of cloth (*farsh*) is spread. The Diwan dressed in typical Mughal attire arrives after night prayer and occupies a prominent seat. The function begins with the recitation of the Fatiha (prayer), which is followed by

the distribution of sugar plums especially prepared for the functions first, among the Khadims and officials and then for general public. Religious and devotional songs are sung mainly in praise of Khwaja by the *qawwals*, song continues till the doors of the shrine are closed at night. The function is presided by Diwan.

Monthly rituals: On every sixth of the lunar month, a special gathering is arranged to mark the sad demise of Khwaja. The function and its process is slightly abridged during the month of Ramadan. Hymns are not sung by *qawwals* only Fatiha is observed at night. On this day Khadims arrange a function called *chatti sharif*. It begins at 9 AM in the Ahata-e-Noor with the recitation of the holy Quran (*Quran khwani*). It is attended by a large number of people. One of the Khadim recites the genealogy of Khwaja. After completing Fatiha (Prayer) sugar plums and batashas are distributed. The whole function is held under the surveillance of Anjuman of Syed Zadgan Khuddam.

Yearly rituals: Besides all these functions a number of death anniversaries of great saints are observed throughout the year. Eid-Milad-un-Nabi is celebrated to mark the birth anniversary of Prophet Mohammad. Gathering is organized on this occasion, *langar khana* is opened for all. Similarly Eid-ul-Fitr, Eid-ul-Azha and Eid-ul-Qadeer Khum are celebrated and prayer is done in the mosques of the shrine except Eid-ul-Qadeer Khum. After prayer, hymns are sung by *qawwals* glorifying Prophets and Caliphs of Islam.

At *Shab-e-Barat* (14th Sha'ban), graves of the city of Ajmer are visited by the officials and Khadims of the shrine. Prayer is done in the shrine. On *Shab-e-Qadar* (27th Ramadan), verses of holy Quran are recited by Khadims and the whole Quran is finished in one night. After 11.PM *Shabena* is performed. The day of *Ashura* (10th Moharram) and its mourning is seriously observed by the Khadims and officials of the shrine. From the first of Moharram to the tenth, every day gathering is organized in *Imambara*, outside of the premises on seven and eight Moharram *tazyas* are performed on the day of *Ashura*. Khadims recite *shahadat nama* and food (*langar*) is distributed among the Khadims and the poor. The *Urs* of Khwaja Usman Harwani, the spiritual mentor of Khwaja is held on 5th Shawwal. On this occasion Jannati Darwaza (Paradise gate) is opened for a day. In the similar vein *Urs* of Khwaja Fakhruddin Gurdezi brother of Khwaja on 27th Rajab, *Urs* of Khwaja's son khwaja Abu Saeed on 17th Rajab and *Urs* of Bibi Hafiz Jamal, daughter of Khwaja are also held on 18th Rajab, at the shrine. Thus the whole year a number of religious ceremonies one after another take place at shrine all these activities keep the pilgrim and people busy in devotional activities and in other sense keep alive the Sufi spirit.

Annual Urs: 'The *Urs* celebrations still do infuse a religious spirit in people deepening and heightening religious feeling'.¹¹ Four or five days before the starting of annual *Urs*, that is on 25th Jamadi-us-Sani, the flag hosting ceremony over the Buland Darwaza takes place. People in new clothes gather in the courtyard which lies between the *langar*

khana and *mahfil khana*. *Qalandars* and *faqirs* come from Delhi with *charris* (big and small flags) of Qutub Sahab, the successor of Khwaja. Procession of Khadims, pilgrims and others is taken at the gate and homage is offered at the shrine.

On the citing of moon of the month of Rajab, the annual ceremony commences by beating of the drums. *Qawwals* sung hymn in praise of Khwaja. These hymns consist a prayer to God for making the shrine eternal and poised. On the main pre *Urs* ceremony shrine is given *ghusl* known as *mazar ka ghusl* and it is cleaned and washed twice at night during all six days Khadims sweep the flowers and first washing is done between 8:30 and 10:30 PM. Grave is washed with rose water and then the essence of flowers is sprinkled. It entailed removal of *sandal* wood paste which is applied on *mazar* (tomb) throughout the year. This is distributed as *tabarruk*. After *Fatiha* (prayer) Khadims let the doors opened for general public. The second *ghusl* takes place around 1 AM which is attended by the Diwan. Seven representatives of the Khadims called *sarghanas* are also present at the moment. *Ghusl* is done in an hour and then the shrine is closed for the whole night. The usual daily service of afternoon is performed in normal days, is not done during these six days, so that pilgrims may visit the shrine.

In all six days *mahfil-i-sama* (gathering) is arranged. Chanting of spiritual and devotional songs create an atmosphere of glorification

and showering of love and respect for Khwaja. Gathering has a distinct discipline and code of conduct. Some feature of the gathering betray the impact of Mughal court. Diwan arrives with torch bears and macebearers as escort. They are also dressed in Mughal costumes while Diwan of the Dargah is dressed in *saffron* robes. According to Mughal tradition he sits under a canopy. Along with Diwan, Khadims, Sajjada Nashins, Mutawallis and Dervishes also sit with him. Two macebearers remain standing by the side of the Diwan. Every evening for six days of the *Urs* the *qawwali* session would be held as per custom, the *Shahi qawwals* of the Daragh Ajmer Sharif would be first to sing. They would be followed by scores of *qawwals* who have come from all over the country. Diwan leaves the function to attend the second *ghusl* ceremony at 1 PM, meanwhile the function is presided by his representative. When Diwan returns back, the function comes to an end around 3 AM. Spiritual poems in Persian, Urdu and other local dialects are sung in the other parts of the courtyard. Paradise gate (Jannati Darwaza) in the shrine is opened exclusively on the day, the Jannati Darwaza is generally kept closed for the whole year except on *Urs* days, on both Eids and on 6th Shawwal, when the *Urs* of Khwaja's Pir is held. It is a belief that one who enters this door will enter paradise or attend supreme spiritual bliss.

Pilgrims can be seen reciting the Quran, in the other parts of the shrine. They also perform *milad sharif* and pray while listening to religious songs in meditation. The other feature of the function is a

huge gathering of the visitors. The pilgrims near about 400000 (4 lakh) come annually to participate *Urs* ceremony from different parts of the country to attend *Urs*, with garlands, a cloth sheet (*chadar*), flowers and expensive offerings. Several pilgrims have their heads shaved and bring sugar plums and dry fruits. Foreign visitors including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Iraq come to attend *Urs* of Khwaja. With the permission of Indian government, officials and pilgrims from Pakistan numbering between (400-500) and Bangladesh also attend the ceremony. Large velvet embroidered cloth sheet is also presented on behalf of President of Pakistan. A cheque of Rs. 6 lakh was recently presented to the shrine on behalf of President of Pakistan. The delegation of India on behalf of President and Prime Minister also presented costly (*chadar*) large cloth sheet to the shrine. *Chadars* on behalf of B.J.P. Leaders Atal Bihari Vajpayee (former Prime Minister) and L.K. Adwani President B.J.P former Deputy Prime Minister were offered at the shrine. The *chadar* on behalf of L.K. Adwani was offered for the first time. Main building of the shrine is illuminated at night with electric bulbs and candles. Ceremony of *roshni* takes place. Food is prepared in both the cauldrons by a particular group known as *anderkotis*. The expenses of food and illumination is met by pilgrims. The gathering gives an opportunity for the heads of the different shrines in India as well as to the spiritual and mystic orders. They gather on this occasion, with their disciples to receive the blessings of Khwaja. *Khadims* are occupied in performing rituals, guiding pilgrims

and providing accommodation to them. Friday prayer is also the other important gathering during these days. On that day the whole city seems to bow in reverence to the greatness of God.

Qul final day ceremonies: On the eve of 6th Rajab, the celebration attains its zenith of fervour. Packed with the pilgrims, rites and prayer is done. They also recite the verses of the Holy Quran and listen *qawwalis* sung by the *qawwals* in the premises. On 6th Rajab, at 11 AM Khadims approach towards the shrine carrying flowers, fragrance sticks and sugar plums, in order to perform traditional rituals. Genealogy of Khwaja is recited by a Khadim announcing their association to the spiritual mentor.

Khadims seek blessings and pray on the behalf of pilgrims. They recite Holy Quran and a verse known as *darud* till the arrival of Diwan from the *mahfil khana* (gathering). *Qawwals* sing hymn in praise of Khwaja. In the end canon shots (*golas*) are fired in air finally drums are beaten to mark the closing ceremony of *Urs* or *Qul*. Diwan accompanied with two or three close relatives for whose entrance and presence permission has already been taken from the Khadims, moves towards the shrine. On entering he kisses the sepulcher and embraces flowers. One of the Khadim ties a turban over his head and spreads the cloth sheet over his bowed head and prays for him, he then gives him *tabarruk* (gift), consisting of sugar plums, flowers and *sandal*. In a return Diwan offers him some money as *nazar* or gift. Fatiha prayer is

then recited by the hereditary employees of the shrine. These employees have been permanently and hereditarily enjoying the privileges. After Diwan retires and comes back to his palace where Khadims offer the Fatiha (prayer) on the food. The food is then exclusively distributed among the poor, relatives, officials as well as to the pilgrims of the shrine.

Beside the main *Urs*, the *Urs* of all four Caliphs of Islam is observed at the shrine such as annual *Urs* of Hazrat Abu Bakar Siddiqi, Hazrat Umar Farooq, Hazrat Usman Ghani and Hazrat Ali. *Urs* of Hazrat Imam Hasan, Hazrat Imam Husain and Hazrat Fatima is also observed. *Urs* of the spiritual saints, disciples and spirituals mentor is also observed such as *Urs* of Hazrat Khwaja Usman Harwani, Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, Hazrat Baba Farid, Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia, Hazrat Khwaja Hamiduddin Nagori, Khwaja Fakhruddin Chisti, Khwaja Fakhruddin Gurdezi. These *Urs* are observed and celebrated by the association of the shrine, on behalf of whole Khadim community, collectively and individually at each and every Khadim's house.

Pilgrims depart from Ajmer at the end of *Urs*. Khadims assist them, and present them gifts in the form of flowers, *sandal* powder, threads (coloured), which they are suppose to distribute among their relatives and to those who have faith in Khwaja.

Rituals Performed by the Pilgrims at the Shrine

Pilgrims belonging to different age, gender and class come in large numbers, among them medium and lower income classes are found in large numbers. On Thursday, Friday, holidays and ceremonial days there are approximately 50000 pilgrims, visiting the shrine. Whereas on other days there are approximately 30000 pilgrims belonging to various, countries such as Pakistan, Iran, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Burma, Afghanistan, Africa and European countries. They are of different caste, religion and creed. They visit the shrine to pay homage and receive blessings of Khwaja. They pray for the fulfillment of their wishes and needs, some of them are ill and pray for the cure, they come for spiritual healing and for the solution of their family problems. Many childless couples visit to pray. These pilgrims hold a firm faith that through Khwaja their desires would be fulfilled.

There are certain obligations and respect, which a pilgrim has to observe in the shrine. One has to take off his or her shoes and hand over to the shoe keeper against payment. Pilgrims are not allowed without covering heads. They very first come in contact with Khadims. They purchase flowers, sugar plums, fragrance sticks from the market situated in the premises of shrine, and outside of the shrine. Traditionally a pilgrim has to put the flowers on his or her head bowed and enters into the sepulcher. While leaving one should not show his or her back towards the grave of Khwaja. Dua Navees are present in

courtyard for offering Dua. They pray for the blessing and fulfillment of the wishes of pilgrims. Pilgrims enter the tomb from left hand side and perform *tawaf*. Some pilgrims are observed standing at the main grave praying for the fulfillments of their needs. They scatter flowers around, and on the main grave. After performing *tawaf* and praying, pilgrims come out kissing the exit gate without showing their back. They also scatter fragrance and ambergris on the specified area of the shrine. After performing prayers at the main grave they also visit other graves. Some of them read the verses of holy Quran such as, Sura-e-Yaseen, Sura-e-Mulk, Sura-e-Juma, Aayat Al Kursi and Char Qul. They also pray for the solution of their problems, sitting on the specific places. Generally the gathering of the pilgrims is a mixture of males and females, but at the time of reciting verses of holy Quran and Dua they are separated (Fig.11). The shrine has a well-established administration, officials, including Syed Zadgans have their offices in the premises of shrine. Pilgrims seek help of them in performing rites and rituals. Pilgrims believe that performing rites and rituals in the presence of Sajjada Nashins would bring blessings and their wishes would be fulfilled. According to consensus there are near about five thousand family members of the Khadims who are associated with the shrine directly or indirectly. Presently the post of Mutawalli has been abolished replacing with Nazims, who are administrators.

At shrine a number of boxes are kept for offering money. Pilgrims put money in these boxes as well as in the cauldrons. Flowers

scattered by the pilgrims at the shrine reflects their reverence and devotion towards Khwaja, leaves of flowers are collected and distributed to the pilgrims along with sugar plums by the Khadims. The treasurer or niche collector collects the money accumulated in the cauldrons, they use the money for the preparation of food, which is distributed among the pilgrims. The pilgrims arrange sugar plums for distribution. It is a common practice to tie thread at the gate and around the shrine (Fig.12). The thread is firstly purified by touching it on the main grave and it is then tied on the gates of main grave, some pilgrims put lock on the gate. Candle lighting (*roshni*) is done on different occasions as well as everyday before the evening prayer. It is a common practice of all the shrines of India.

Belongings of the shrine are important and sacred. One is ought to respect and pay reverence to the gates, trees, walls, water, marble, stone and carpets. Gates of entry and exit enjoys prime position, pilgrims touch the gate with reverence before entering and leaving the shrine. Some pilgrims can be observed bowing and kissing it. Besides the tomb a big water reservoir is also found. It's water is given to the pilgrims, they carry it for preservation and distribution among their relatives and friends. A visit paid by the rulers to the shrine also raised its prestige in the eyes of the people. The first Sultan reported to have visited the shrine was Mohammad Bin Tughluq. Since then it became established custom for the Sultans to visit the Dargah of an eminent Sufi if they happened to visit the vicinity, and to distribute money to the



Fig. 11: Ladies reciting Quran and Dua



Fig. 12: Ladies tying thread at the gate of the shrine

servitors of the Dargah. Mughal emperor Akbar's successors also visited and showed respect to the shrine.

Some pilgrims of the shrine were interviewed, about their wish and hope on visiting the shrine. Syed Haider Ali one of the pilgrims had come from Mumbai. He expressed and declared his firm faith and reliance on Khwaja. He told that once he got seriously ill and consulted the doctors but in vain, finally he came to the shrine and prayed, soon he recovered from illness. Since then he visits the shrine with utter devotion and pays homage to Khwaja. Mohammad Rafi came to the shrine all the way from Bangladesh, to thank Khwaja as with his blessings he got employment. Mohammad Ghous of Gujarat got his family dispute settled on visiting and praying at the shrine. The abnormal child of Mr. Ayub Khan of Maharashtra became normal and active on offering *nazar* at the shrine. Gulzar Ahmed was blessed by a child after he prayed at the shrine. A lady from Uttar Pradesh, named Muskan was blessed by a boy as she had visited the shrine and prayed after tying a thread on the gate of the tomb. Mohammad Salim of Ajmer had been ill since many days, and was also not having means for earning money, he came to the shrine and prayed very soon he recovered from illness and was placed in a reputed business firm. These pilgrims were blessed and their wishes were fulfilled by the grace of Khwaja. Thus they have become a regular visitors of the shrine.

Miracles Performed by Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti

In order to impress upon his divine mission and himself being a spiritual mentor, Khwaja performed several miracles consciously and unconsciously. This increased the number of his disciples and attracted the pilgrims who pay homage by visiting the shrine hitherto. Some prominent miracles are:

1. **Ziyarat-e-Kaaba:** According to Hazrat Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, Khwaja use to perform Haj at Mecca every year. Pilgrims of Haj who were familiar to him saw him at Mecca performing Haj. At last it was known that he was seen at Mecca in the night and was also seen in the morning prayer (Fajr) in Ajmer on the next day. Thus his simultaneous presence at both places, was miraculous.¹²
2. **Mazloom Nawazi:** Once a disciple of Khwaja visited and informed him that Governor of the city intends to outcast him from the city. Khwaja asked him where is he? (about Governor). Disciple told him that the Governor has gone to forest for hunting. Then Khwaja said that if the Governor is a sinner and comes back from the forest safely it would be surprising. Later it was known that the Governor died falling from horse.¹³
3. **Karamat-e-Khizri:** Once Khwaja was sitting in meditation, he disappeared and was not seen for next forty days.¹⁴
4. **Karamt-e-Khaleeli:** In Baghdad seven Zoroastrians were very popular and were spiritually famous as they used to eat food

scantly. People were attracted by their spiritual excellence. As soon as Khwaja saw them, they all became afraid and started shivering and fell down on his knees. Khwaja asked them why they worship fire? they replied that, fire may not burn them on the day of judgment, on doing so. Khwaja said why don't you worship God, through whom you may achieve your destination Khwaja also stated and asked them that what is the importance of fire in comparison to God? without God's command nothing can happen. Khwaja then put his mantle in fire by saying that if Allah or God wishes the mantle will not burn. The mantle did not caught fire. Observing such miracle of Khwaja Zoroastrians accepted Islam and became his follower.¹⁵

5. **Accepting Islam:** While Khwaja was traveling with his disciples he reached to a city where Muslims used to collect tax on compulsion. On Khwaja's arrival, the people of city become alarmed and thought that Khwaja has come to disturb the peace of the city. Thus they armed themselves and moved to attack Khwaja and his group. As soon Khwaja saw them they spoke to him politely and said we are most obedient, you bless us, we confer our faith in Islam. Khwaja converted them to Muslims.¹⁶
6. **Karamat-e-Sulaimani:** Once Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki was roaming hand in hand with King Shamsuddin Altamash in royal fort. Several dignitaries and ruling officials were also present. Meanwhile a characterless woman approached king and

alleged that she is carrying Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki's child in her womb. King and other people were surprised and shocked to know. Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki became embarrassed and sought help of Khwaja Moinuddin(also known as Gharib Nawaz) who was in Ajmer at that time, all of a sudden he miraculously appeared at the place and facing the pregnant woman asked the child (in the womb) to explain the reality. The child said that the charge on Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki is baseless. In fact she is persuaded by the enemies to put this false charge against Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki. Hearing this the characterless woman became embarrassed and remorseful.¹⁷

7. **Karamat-e-Gharib Nawazi:** Once a person came to Hazrat Baba Fariduddin Ganj Shakar and told that he had seen a dream in which Hazrat Khwaja Gharib Nawaz offered him six breads. Since then it has been sixty years that the gift is continuously received. Hazrat Baba Fariduddin Ganj Shakar replied it was not a dream but actually by a mercy of God that Khwaja Gharib Nawaz was so generous upon you, so that you should always remain prosper.¹⁸
8. **Karamat (anonymous):** A Muslim servant of King of Pithawara, came to see Khwaja and requested him heartily to accept him as his disciple. Khwaja refused. He narrated the whole event to the king. King persuaded Khwaja to take servant as his disciple. Khwaja replied that this man has three habits which he will never

leave, firstly he will keep committing sin continuously, secondly he is a servant of a King and he never accepts a person who bows in front of others except God and thirdly, I have seen him dying as a dishonest person in Loh-e-Mahfooz (where the destiny of a person is written). When King came to know all he became annoyed and said that poor saint (Dervish) has prophesied this, tell him to leave the city. Finally it was known that the person who met Khwaja, committed suicide by drowning himself in the sea.¹⁹

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II. *Shrine of Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya*



Fig. 1: Shrine of Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya



Fig. 2: Grave of Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya

Shajra-i- Nasabi of Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya (R.A.)

Hazrat Mohammad Rasolulah (S.A.W.)

Hazrat Ali Ibn Abu Talib (Karam-ullah-o-Wajho)

Hazrat Imam Husain (R.A.)

Hazrat Imam Zainulabdin (R.A.)

Hazrat Imam Bagar (R.A.)

Hazrat Imam Jafar Sadiq (R.A.)

Hazrat Imam Moosa Kazim (R.A.)

Hazrat Imam Moosa Reza (R.A.)

Hazrat Imam Mohammad Jawad Taqi (R.A.)

Hazrat Imam Ali Hadi Naqi (R.A.)

Hazrat Imam Syedna Jafar Sani (R.A.)

Hazrat Syedna Ali Asqar (R.A.)

Hazrat Syedna Abdullah (R.A.)

Hazrat Syedna Ahmad (R.A.)

Hazrat Syedna Ali (R.A.)

Hazrat Syedna Hasan Khullami (R.A.)

Hazrat Syedna Abdullah Khullami (R.A.)

Hazrat Syedna Ali Bukhari (R.A.)

Hazrat Syedna Syed Ahmad (R.A.)

Hazrat Syedna Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya (R.A.)¹

Shajra-i-Tariqat (Spiritual Tree) of Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin

Auliya (R.A.)

Hazrat Mohammad Rasolulah (S.A.W.)

Maula-e-Kainat Hazrat Ali (Karam-ullah-o-Wajih)

Hazrat Khwaja Hasan Basri (R.A.)

Hazrat Khwaja Abdul Wahid (R.A.)

Hazrat Khwaja Fuzail Bin Ayaz (R.A.)

Hazrat Khwaja Ibrahim Bin Adham (R.A.)

Hazrat Khwaja Sadeed Bin Huzaifa (R.A.)

Hazrat Khwaja Aminuddin Abi Hubera Basri (R.A.)

Hazrat Khwaja Mumshad Dinwri (R.A.)

Hazrat Khwaja Abu Ishaque Shami (R.A.)

Hazrat Khwaja Qutubuddin Abu Mohammad (R.A.)

Hazrat Khwaja Nasehuddin Abu Mohammad Chisti (R.A.)

Hazrat Khwaja Nasiruddin Abu Yusuf Chisti (R.A.)

Hazrat Khwaja Qutubuddin Modood Chisti (R.A.)

Hazrat Khwaja Haji Sharif Zendani (R.A.)

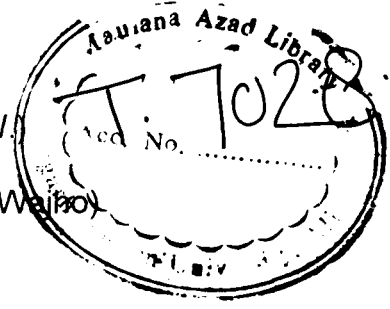
Hazrat Khwaja Usman Harwani (R.A.)

Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti (R.A.)

Hazrat Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki (R.A.)

Hazrat Khwaja Fariduddin Ganj Shakar (R.A.)

Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya (R.A.)²



Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya

Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya was a Sufi saint of the fourteenth century India. He was a celebrated disciple of Baba Farid. He was born in Badaun, east of Delhi. Prior to the conquest of Delhi by the Turks, Badaun, was a renowned centre of Islam between 1202 and 1209, Hazrat Nizamuddin's grandfather, Syed Ali, accompanied by his cousin Syed Arab, migrated from Bukhara to Badaun.³ 'Hazrat Nizamuddin was born in 1238 (636A.H.). His real name was Mohammad and his father was called Ahmad. The later died when Hazrat Nizamuddin was five years old. His mother, endowed with great piety and foresight, selected Badaun's most gifted teachers for her son's education. His first tutor was Shadi Muqri, an expert in reciting the Quran, his teaching was considered to be miraculous and enabled Hazrat to master the Quran perfectly'.⁴

When Hazrat Nizamuddin was twelve years old, he first heard of Baba Farid through *qawwals* (a musician) who had been to both Multan and Ajodhan. He gave an account of Baba Farid's *jamaat khana* at Ajodhan. Hazrat Nizamuddin was so inspired by the grandeur of Baba Farid that after each prayer he began to repeat the name of Baba Farid.⁵

At the tender age of sixteen Hazrat Nizamuddin, accompanied by his mother and sister, left for Delhi in order to complete his education.⁶ 'There he met Hazrat Fariduddin Ganj Shakar. He was

welcomed with a great deal of honour and warmth by Baba Farid who offered him a bed in the *jamaat khana*. Hazrat Nizamuddin was immediately initiated and got his head shaved. This process was accompanied by gentle admonitions from Baba Farid suggesting that he should also lose the conceit he had developed as an alim. The Baba urged him to become fully involved in ascetic exercises on his return to Delhi. Fasting was the first half of the way along the Sufi path, said the Baba, and prayers and pilgrimages the other'.⁷

'On the second visit to Ajodhan, Hazrat Nizamuddin learnt six chapters of the Quran under the Baba's tutorship, also the Tamhid of Abu Shakur Sulami and the Awariful Maarif. In February 1265, Hazrat made his third and final visit to Baba. He received his *khalifat-nama* from Baba Farid on 29th June 1265'.⁸ It recorded that Hazrat Nizamuddin had studied the Tamhidul Muhtadi of Abu Shakur with great precision under his direction, and was now authorized for preaching. Moreover, he was permitted to disseminate Baba's teachings he had acquired and was advised to lead an ascetic life'.⁹

'Asking Hazrat to show his *khilafat-nama* to Shaikh Jamaluddin at Hansi, and to Qazi Muntajabuddin at Delhi, Baba blessed him saying:

You will be a tree under whose shadow the people
will find rest... you should strengthen your spirits by

devotion... I have handed over all these things to you
for at the time of my death you will not be present'.¹⁰

'When Shaikh Jamaluddin saw the *khilafat-nama* he greatly approved and thanked God that such a worthy disciple had obtained it. The life of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi was to become the epitome of Baba Farid's teachings, and it marked the crystallization of the ideology of the Chishti Order. Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya died on 3rd April 1325 (18th Rabi-us-Sani 725 A.H.)'.¹¹ Before his death, he summoned his relatives as well as his servant, Iqbal, and ordered them to confirm that there was not a morsel of food left in the house. They assured him that only a few handfuls of grain is left and that too had been kept for the *langar khana*. Hazrat was enraged at Iqbal's preservation of worthless assets and ordered it to be immediately given to the poor.¹²

'Hazrat Nizamuddin's *langar khana* was open to Hindus and Muslims alike. Although his main concern was an amelioration of the conditions of the Muslims, he also extended concern and care for Hindus'.¹³

History of the Shrine

Khanqah: Several rich and well off disciples of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, sought his permission to build a Khanqah (rest room) in order to express their devotion and sincerity for him. One day Imad-ul-Mulk Ziauddin Wakil the Ameer of the city personally expressed his intention

of building a Khanqah but was refused by Hazrat. Later Ziauddin Wakil requested Hazrat's servant Iqbal and Syed Hasan Son of Syed Mohammad Kirmani, to pursue and get Hazrat's permission, Hazrat then asserted that he acknowledges intense devotion and sincerity of Ziauddin towards him and his intention to serve him by building a Kanqah (rest room), but there is a secret behind his refusal that one who will construct the Khanqah, will surely die. To this Ziauddin expressed his profound devotion by telling that, it would be a great honour for him if he will have to give up his life for the service of Hazrat, he wants his Muslim brothers to be befitted by the divine and spiritual mentor. Thus he should be allowed to build Khanqah. Hazrat was compelled to allow him but, advised him to complete the construction in a month. Meanwhile Hazrat started living at a village called Kilokhari near Jama Masjid. He usually visited the construction site at the eve of every Friday and use to stay for rest of the week, praying and meditating. Four hundred silver coins were spent for the maintenance of the Khanqah. When the construction was completed Hazrat with his friends and disciples came to Khanqah for living permanently and on the same day Ziauddin Wakil died on his lap.

Dam-e-aakhir tere zano par jo apna sar ho.

Khush-naseebi main hamare na koi humsur ho.

May I die at your lap

Fortunately if am the only one to die.¹⁴

The shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya is situated at Delhi, near Humayun's tomb at East – South of the city. Presently it is under the

control of archeological survey of India. The library of the shrine is still safe and good condition, in one of the rooms of the library Hazrat took his last breath, he used to rest in winter and summer.

Physical Description of the Shrine

The shrine is named after the spiritual mentor Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, presently the location is called as Basti Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. The town (Basti) has its historical relevance and importance as several saints are buried here. South door of the shrine is known as Bauli Darwaza while entering the shrine one comes across a historical pond, whose water was once turned into oil for burning lamp, on the prayer of Hazrat.

Bauli (well or hole): It was constructed in the year 1321, when Hazrat Nizamuddin was alive. The construction was delayed and disrupted because of the shortage of labourers as Gayasuddin Tughlaq was constructing his fort, his influence and dominance did not allowed the labourers to work for the shrine, thus the labourers worked at night and the construction of Bauli progressed. When Gayasuddin Tughlaq came to know about the construction of Bauli at the shrine he became agitated and ordered the supply of oil (burnt in lamps at night for the construction of shrine) to be stopped. Hazrat thus prayed and the water of the pond was turned to oil and was used for burning lamps. After the completion of the construction of Bauli, Hazrat Nizamuddin thanked God and allowed the general public to draw water from the

pond. Thus, hitherto general public is drawing water from it. The water of this sacred pond is also used at the commencement of some rituals of the shrine. The Bauli is about 180 × 120 ft surrounded by a huge and strong wall cum enclosure. There are descending stairs extending and going towards south, beneath the level of Bauli. Stairs are made in such a pattern that after every three small stairs there is a big and wide stair. About forty stairs are open without touching water, marble stone is being fixed at one of the stairs for the prayers (*namaz*). During the cleaning of Bauli, it was found that there are four openings, from the back of these opening, a series of stairs begins from the four corners, ending with a big stairs many rounded stairs begins under one of the main stairs, ending at a well. The circumference of this well is about 8 × 8 yard, deep. Bauli always has about 16 or 17 gaz of deep water. There is a big arch (*taq*) and two small one, four arches are placed at the South and East walls. It is so large that two persons can take bath easily. There is a half yard round way beneath the arch where one can move freely and perform *tawaf* of Bauli. Durable and fine tiles are used for the construction of Bauli. It is surrounded by different buildings. At the West-East of it, thin corridors are constructed, these corridors leads to the gate of shrine. Mohammad Maroof son of Wahiduddin built the South corridor in 1380. There is a narrow way which is partly opened and closed after going down on stairs of Bauli. This passage is called as *chhat* (roof), it was built by Mohammad Maroof in the period of Sultan Firoz Shah. Prior to the

construction of this roof the only way for Bauli was from the mosque and people used to come from there directly for *wazu*. All buildings at the South of Bauli were constructed in the period of Sultan Firoz Shah (Fig. 3).

Mosque over Bauli – minarets and divers: There is a magnificent mosque over the west wall of Bauli having small minarets on the roof, *it was built during the rule of Pathans. There is an opening and it is very difficult for an individual to jump. Divers jump from a minaret which is of about 60 ft high, displaying their skill, and earn money from the spectators. Their performance is amazing and spectacular.*

Raoti dome of Bai Koklai: It was built in 1670. It is located at the side of Bauli, there is a tomb made of marble, it is beautiful and magnificent and pleases the sense of the spectator. The tomb is placed at the west of Bauli and it is known as Bai Koklai Bint Mulayam Khan tomb. The tomb looks like a Raoti. The talisman of Bai Koklai's tomb is very clear and beautiful, beyond one's imagination. The marble and its clearness is amazing. Sixty thousand rupees were spent on the construction of this tomb. The tomb's splendour and appearance and its delicate handicraft suspends the disbelief that it was being constructed on minimum amount. The roof of rectangular structure is like a box having four verandahs each. Close to the talisman of the grave, 99 names of the God is engraved beautifully. Each and every word is engraved beautifully as if stone is enameled in a ring at right

side a stone of purple colour is fixed, on it verses of Persian poetry is written .It reflects the unique human artistry on stone.

Cheenee's dome: It is a small dome situated at the Bauli. At its internal part delicate Bone-China is placed and verses are written. A mosque is situated under this dome which is known as Bauli's mosque. It is not known that who made the dome. The dome is very beautiful, artistry under its roof is still safe and intact. The condition of the dome is very bad.

Syedanie's tomb: Actually it is the grave of Hazrat Farhatullah Khan Raees Dehlawi. There are only two graves inside the tomb and several lying at the outside. The tomb also has a red stone grave at the right side, where Ameer Khusro's Ghazals are written.

Masjid-e-khalji: A very big and magnificent mosque is situated at the west of the shrine. It has five tombs the middle one is very huge and exceptionally unique. The main door of the tomb is very big, high and fine surrounded by the pillars (*mehrab*) on the both side of the door fine nets are incorporated. At the east, near the south pillar, date of death is inscribed. The building is made of red marble. The verses of Quran and hadith are written on it, one can notice a golden bowl hanging in the middle. The bowl has a hole known as the mark of bullet. The middle tomb was built by Khazar Khan, son of Sultan Alauddeen Khalji in the life time of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. The two portions of the tomb, left and right was built after the death of Hazrat

Nizamuddin. Adjacent to the west corner of the mosque there is a coloured netted enclosure, at the end there is a small and beautiful heavy door from where there is a passage to Ameer Khusro's room. The netted enclosure turns to south and merges with the room (Hujra) of Mirza Jahangir.¹⁵

Langar Khana (free kitchen): It was built by Hazrat Nizamuddin. It is old and situated at the eastern door of shrine lying outside.

Muhajjar (tomb) of Mirza Jahangir: Mirza Jahangir the son of emperor Akbar was against British rule in India, he fired bullet at an English resident in Delhi as a result he was punished by company Bhadur and was put on house arrest at Allahabad, later he died under punishment in the year of 1821. His mother Nawab Mumtaz Mahal, some how managed to bring back his dead body from Allahabad and buried in a Muhajjar. It was made of fine marble. The artistry on it makes it splendid and beautiful. It is situated about one and half gaz above the verandah of the shrine. It has two doors one at West and other at East. At the right and left there are verandahs. At the outside of the East's door and in front there is a huge door. Many graves are found at the place.

Muhajjar (tomb) Mohammad Shah Rangeela Badshah: This tomb is situated at a near distance to Mirza Jahangir's Muhajjar. It is made of marble and located at the foot side of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya's holy tomb (Roza-e-Mubarak). The length and width is about 16 × 20 ft,

small minarets can be seen at four corners of Muhajjar. The entire construction of Muhajjar is of white marble.

Muhajjar (tomb) of Jahan Ara Begum: Jahan Ara was the beloved daughter of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, her tomb is situated at the side of Mohammad Rangeela's tomb and extends up to the south corner of Khajji's mosque. She died in the year 1681. Jahan Ara purchased the land by paying heavily to the head of shrine and built a beautiful cage of marble before her death. At the North of the tomb of Mirza Jahangir there is a netted closet at its side. There is a door and small window on which verses are engraved.

Location of the shrine: Ameer Khurd Kirmani describes the place where Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya's holy tomb is situated, it was a deserted and marshy place. After Hazrat's sad demise, Sultan Mohammad Tughlaq, son of Gyasuddin Tughlaq built a magnificent tomb at the tomb. The tomb was decorated and aligned with beautiful and appealing buildings and domes. Thus the tomb has its distinctive feature and uniqueness unlikely to be surpassed by any other tomb. According to some writers the tomb was destroyed and only Muhajjar (grave) was built. Until the period of Mughal emperor Akbar in the year of 1562, Nawab Syed Farid Khan built a tomb of twelve pillars, fixed with marble net on the verandah. A slate (Loh) was being laid down over Hazrat Nizamuddin's head, in which *kalma tayyaba* and some poetry in Persian are engraved. In the period of Jahangir (1608). Nawab Farid Khan (in reference to Syed Murtaza Khan, founder of

Faridabad) laid down a snail's work over the shrine. During the reign of Shah Jahan in the year of 1652 Khalilullah Khan son of Meera Husaini Namatullahi Shah Jahan Abad built a *ghulam gardish* around the tomb which is also known as Beest Dari. It has red stone pillars. In the year of 1755 Azizuddin Aalamgir Sani engraved four lines of poetry in the form of couplet on the marble and fixed it at the foot of Hazrat's grave. In the year of 1820 Nawab Faizullah Khan Bangash, put a protective cover on Beest Dari roof by using copper sheets, engraved the date of construction of roof, which fell down after *ghulam gardish* was built. Again in the year of 1823 Akbar Sani built the tomb using marble and fixed a large golden bowl over it. This enhanced the beauty of the tomb. According to the wishes of Hazrat Maulana Fakhruddin, Nawab Ahmad Baksh Khan of Loharu replaced the red stone pillar of Beest Dari with marble pillars. Marble court around the shrine was laid down by Nawab Khursheed Jah Nizam of Hyderabad Deccan, the following details are engraved on it.

Guzraneeda Ghulamaan-e-Ghulam Fadevi Mohiuddin Bahadur Shams-ul-Umra Ameer Kabeer Khursheed Jah Beest-o-Yakom Mah Safar (21Safar month) 1300 A.H.¹⁶

Emperor Mohammad Shah built the marble floor of the shrine. Prayer (*namaz*) can be performed on a wide strip of marble. The doors of the shrine have silver sheets. Fragrance sticks pots perfume bottles, candle stand, *shamadans*, cannaveel and other things were made of

silver and gold, which were looted by Sada Shiva Bhau a Maratha chief in 1756.

Tomb of Hazrat Ameer Khusro: The entrance of the tomb is through a way having beautiful *sangeen* door at the South court of Hazrat's Aastana. After the door there is a tomb of Maulana Umer. At the right side east netted court of Hazrat Ameer Khusro's tomb Ghulam Gardish is situated. At the left and in front Khwaja Abu Bakar Musallidar's tombs is placed. At the left and some distance the tombs of Khwaja Rafiuddin Harwan and Khwaja Saleh are situated in an enclosed wall. Towards the East of this wall there is an old tree of Khirni planted by Makhdoom Jhanyan Jahan Gasht. There is a big and wide platform in front of the door, it has many graves. Near to the platform a path goes to the West and after two or three steps one can find the door and verandah of Hazrat Ameer Khusro's. After entering the shrine, at right, one can find the grave of Hazrat Shamsuddin Mahroo. The door of Ameer Khusro's tomb is situated at the head side of Hazrat Shamsuddin's grave. The tomb of Hazrat Ameer Khusro is placed in the middle.

Hazrat Ameer Khusro died on 18th Shawwal, in the year of 1324. It is said that in the beginning the tomb of Ameer Khusro was not having a dome or Muhajjar. In the year of 1530 Mughal emperor Babar was ruling, a *choli* court was built by late Syed Mehdi, iron plate was placed at the head of the shrine, *kalma tayyaba* and some verses are engraved on it. In 1605 Mughal emperor Jahangir was ruling. Late

Tahir Mohammad Imaddudin Husain built a Muhajjar and marble minarets at the holy grave which are beautiful and appealing. Several verses are inscribed at the internal wall of dome. The following manuscript is written on it.

"Quail Ain Kalam wabai Ain muqam Tahir Mohammad Imaduddin Husain son of Sultan Ali Sabzwari Gufar Zanoobeh wa Manz Ayyuba Alkatib Abdul Nabin Ayub".

Beside these, poems or verses are engraved at the top of red stone net, windows and doors. Tomb of Khwaja Musheer is located at the South. He was the servant of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, near his grave his son Hazrat Nooruddin's tomb is situated. At some distance and near the West side, the grave of Khwaja Iqbal is situated on a platform. He was also one of the close servant (Khadim) of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, and was sent by Hazrat frequently to congratulate Sultan Qutubuddin Mubarak Khalji, on the occasion of *mahe-no* (new month). Mosque of Nawab Khan Daura Khan is situated which is also known as mosque of Jinn, in front of the it tomb of Hazrat Abu Bakar Mandah is situated. He was the first disciple of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. A graveyard having several tomb, lies in front of the grave of Ameer Khusro. At the back of the graveyard an old building is situated where there is an office of Hazrat Hasan Sani son of Hazrat Hasan Nizami, it also has a tomb. At the left and right side of this building's door there are graves of Zia Barni, Shams Siraj Afeef, and also of the writers of Tareekh-e-Firoz Shahi. Adjacent to this building a stair exists

to the East, and adjacent to this stairs there is an old building which is divided in two rooms (Hujra). The meeting room of Imam of the mosque of shrine is in the second room. Adjoining to this building another old building exists which has three rooms. The first room is known as the meeting room of Chaudary Hasan Masna Sahab and the second one is the resident of the successor of late Syed Abdul Lateef Dehlawi, the third is a torch room which is presently not in use, near to this building old *langar khana* (free kitchen) is placed and extends over a large land towards the South-East. The door of Hazrat Ameer Khusro exists which is huge and high. There is a Khirni tree and a wall in the South.

Safah Sutoon: It is known as old *langar khana*, some parts and verandah have now been connected to Hazrat Ameer Khusro's tomb, where there is a *jarooob khana* and *farash khana*. The third is a store where construction materials of the shrine are kept.

Near to the east door, marble tomb of Hazrat Haji Ial Mohammad Shah is situated and adjacent to this in the South, the tomb of Qazi Qutubuddin Kashani is situated. Towards the south an old building is eminently known as *langar khana*. It may be the same building which was named as Safah Sutoon by Ameer Khurd Kirmani. It is a place where Shaikh-ul-Islam Maulana Rukanuddin Multani met Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. It is an old building having many pillars one fourth part of this are being enclosed, *jarooob khana* and other structure

are placed on it. A stair placed at the East of this building, is the end part of the shrine.

In the main premises of the shrine and around the way from Bauli gate, there are many shops of Peer-Zadas, these shops have been placed for pilgrims who purchase flowers, embroidery sheets, sweets, candles, fragrance sticks. etc for the offering at the shrine, besides these, religious books, pictures of shrines, *janamaz* (a piece of cloth for offering prayer) are also available at these shops. These shops are given on endowment, the rent accumulated are used on the other affairs and expenses of the shrine. Offices of Sajjada Nashin's exclusively of Afzal Nizami Sahab can be found in the shrine.

Buildings and graves at the shrine: Several buildings and graves can be found in and near to the premises, some prominent and important ones are:

Shama-Burj: It is located in front of the Bauli's door and it is in the shape of heavy dome. It appears like a candle. It is beautiful and evident for that reason it is known as candle dome.

Barah Khamba: It is situated at a triangular cross-road which goes from Lodhi road to the shrine. The structure of this building refreshes the memory of Lodhi's period. In the middle there is a dome having twelve pillars for that reason it is known as Barah Khamba.

Lal Mahal: Towards Barah Khamba a beautiful building of red stone can be seen, which reminds us Gayasuddin Balban's period.

Tableeghi Markaz (centre for preaching): It is located at the East of Lal Mahal. Initially a small mosque existed at the place which was built by Mirza Ilahi Baksh Khan Dehlawi and his bungalow was also there. This huge building is also known as Bungalow's mosque. Here religious preachings and teachings are given.

Chausath Khamba: This magnificent building is situated towards the south of Tableeghi Markas. In fact it has the grave of Mirza Aziz Kokaltash who shared milk with Emperor Akbar, Aziz's mother Mahe Anga fed both of them. The building is exclusively made of marble having 64 pillars and placed at a high platform. It could not be referred as a building but a hall based on 64 pillars.

Ghalib academy: It is a building situated near Tableeghi Markas. Functions and ceremonies related to Mirza Ghalib are organized here, after being permitted by the authority.

Urs Mahal: It is a large red stone palace situated near Ghalib's academy. Birthday celebrations and *Urs* of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya are celebrated at this campus. The Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Bakhshi Gulam Mohammad built it on the request of Khwaja Ahmad Nizami's father, Shamsul Mashayaikh Peer Zamin Nizami Syed Bukhari, successor of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya.

Dargahi Markaz (Shrine's Centre): It is near the gate of the shrine. Ceremonies and rituals concerned to the shrine usually takes place. Pilgrims are befitted with the presence of Hazrat Hasan Nizami one of

the notable Khadim of the shrine. The other notable and important buildings and graves are also located.

Grave of Mirza Ghalib: Under the North wall of 64 pillars, there is a grave of an eminent poet Mirza Ghalib. Every year Mirza Ghalib day is celebrated at the grave. The grave was damaged and ruined, Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar appealed and collected money from people and thus the grave was renovated. In the year of 1955, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad a national leader took interest in building a permanent structure on the grave. Thus Muhajjar made of marble was built under the patronage of Ghalib society.

Grave of Khwaja Mohammad Imam: At the West door of Chausath Khamba in a compound, the grave of Khwaja Mohammad Imam is situated. Imam was the son of Maulana Badruddin Ishaq Dehlawi and grandson of Baba Farid Ganj Shakar and successor of Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia.

Endowments of the shrine: Several shops around the shrine are given on rent by the officials of the shrine. The money accumulated from the rent is used on other affairs of the shrine. Sweets, fragrance sticks, candles, flowers, religious books, clothes for offerings are sold in these shops (Fig. 4).



Fig. 3: Bauli (well or hole)



Fig. 4: Endowment shops

Officials and Important Functionaries Related to the Shrine

They are divided into two groups:

1. Directly
2. Indirectly

Directly: They rely on the shrine occupationally and financially and are considered as permanent employees of the shrine. They receive salaries from the shrine every month.

Indirectly: These people are totally dependant on the resources by visiting pilgrims.

Those who rely on the shrine directly include:

Sajjada Nashins: The actual number of Sajjada Nashin at the shrine is not known. But the witness record their presence in good numbers. They play major role in functioning the affairs of the shrine smoothly. These Sajjada Nashin hold permanent offices in the shrine, thus attracting the pilgrims. Some of them also have their offices outside the premises of the shrine. Their first duty is to guide the pilgrims. They are usually seated at a platform, needy pilgrims come to them and kiss their hands and tell their problems and needs. Sajjada Nashins provide solace or comfort to the pilgrims by praying on the behalf of the pilgrims. Being the descendents of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, they enjoy certain privileges at the shrine. Pilgrims pay cash money or gifts after been guided or received by them (Fig. 5).

Khadims: Khadims give their valuable services to the shrine. Their functions are distributed equally and they have one supervisor who invigilates and check their work. They are very closely associated to the rituals and ceremonies of the shrine, pilgrims give them offerings and cash money. They are responsible for arranging and managing the ceremonies and rituals of the shrine. Their monthly income is not fixed and totally depends on the money accumulated from the pilgrims.

Those who rely on the shrine indirectly include :

Dua Navees (writer of prayer) : They are several in numbers and are always present at the shrine, especially in the varandah of the premises. Pilgrims visit them and tell their problems, after becoming fully aware of their needs, these Dua Navees provide remedy for the problems. The Dua Talibs (pilgrims who need Dua) request them for a written Dua. According to the problems and its remedy, they receive Dua from these Dua Navees against cash payment (Fig. 6).

Qawwals: Several *qawwals* can be found at the shrine. They sing hymns in praise of Hazrat Nizamuddin, they entertain and inculcate a sense of devotion in the pilgrims. Several pilgrims can be seen listening the hymns sung by the *qawwals* with utter devotion. They pay money to these *qawwals* (Fig. 7).

Shoe keepers: Several shoe keepers are present at the gate of the shrine. Since pilgrims are suppose to put off their shoes before



Fig. 5: Sajjada Nashin blessing one of the pilgrims



Fig. 6: Dua Navees (writer of prayer)

entering the shrine, they give their shoes to these shoe keepers who look after it, against cash payment (Fig. 8).

Beggars: They can be seen in huge numbers at the shrine. Usually at the path which goes to the shrine. Generally they block the way of the pilgrims, as they insist alms and money from them. The hotel owners have placed their people who stand with coupon and token, so that pilgrims could buy the coupon and give it to these beggars who then can have food. The pilgrims encourage these beggars by giving money, thus they have become hyperactive. These beggars are male as well as female, young and old, sometimes women beggars hold child in their arms in order to gain sympathy of the pilgrims. There are two reason for the large gathering of the beggars at the shrine. Firstly the number of the pilgrims is huge, thus these beggars can beg and earn good money, secondly the pilgrims have charity in their mind at the arrival, they believe that giving alms to the beggars will help them in solving their problems.

Markets: Shop keepers draw maximum benefit from the pilgrims placed around the shrine. Shop keepers sell items for the rituals and ceremonies of the shrine. These shops are placed in and outside of the shrine. In these shops items used for rituals are sold, such as, candles, fragrance sticks, prayer sheets, flowers, sugar plums, religious books related to Islam in general and shrine in particular.

Some shop keepers also sell general items, though these shops



Fig. 7: Qawwal



Fig. 8: Shoe keeper

are less in numbers, items related to the luxuries of women such as, veils, cosmetics, clothes and general books are also sold.

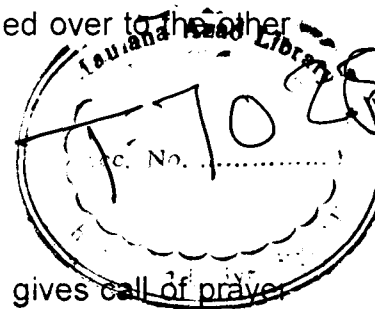
Eatables and beverages are also sold at particular stalls or shops. A large part of their income depends on the pilgrims, who give foods to the beggars. Beside this shop keepers also help for accommodating pilgrims. There are twenty six guest houses around the shrine, they are reserved for pilgrims and provide adequate facilities to the pilgrims. In return good income is generated from pilgrims (Fig. 9).

Vendors: There are several vendors around the shrine. They sell items for offerings and rituals. They also sell general items such as luxuries, cosmetics, candles, fragrance sticks and cloth for offering (*chadar*).

Administration of the Shrine

The shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia at Delhi is distinct and unique. It is not a *waqf* (charity) property. The administration and functioning of the affairs of the shrine is controlled by the successors of Hazrat namely Hazrat Khwaja Syed Mohammad Imam, Khwaja Rafiuddin Harwani, Quazi Mohiuddin Sani and Hazrat Khwaja Abu Bakar. These successors perform religious customs and rituals of shrine in turns. A period of one week is allotted to each successor and his family for performing the duties. The administration changes on

every Wednesday after night prayer and it is handed over to the other successor and his family for a week.¹⁷



Rituals and Ceremonies of the Shrine

Daily rituals: Every morning one of the Mutawalli, gives call of prayer (Azan) and opens the door of the shrine. When the door of the shrine is opened, the pilgrims and needy gather in large number meanwhile the premises as well as the grave is cleaned by the Khadims. Pilgrims register their presence at Aastane Sharif (premises) of the shrine and offer salaam and recite Fatiha (prayer) standing at the door. Morning prayer is collectively performed in Masjid Khalji situated in the premises of the shrine, after prayer people in large number come to the tomb for paying homage and tribute to Hazrat, the process continues until the door of the shrine is closed (Fig. 10). (The time of closing of main door keeps on changing). The rituals continues even after the night prayer. The functionaries (Khadims etc.) of the shrine hold their positions. Khadims guide pilgrims while *qawwals* sing hymns, sitting in the verandah entertaining pilgrims by praising and glorifying Hazrat Nizamuddin, in return they get money from them. Dua Navees are found inside the Beest Dari one of the prominent place of the shrine, they pray on behalf of the pilgrim's demands and wishes. After night prayer main door of the shrine is closed.

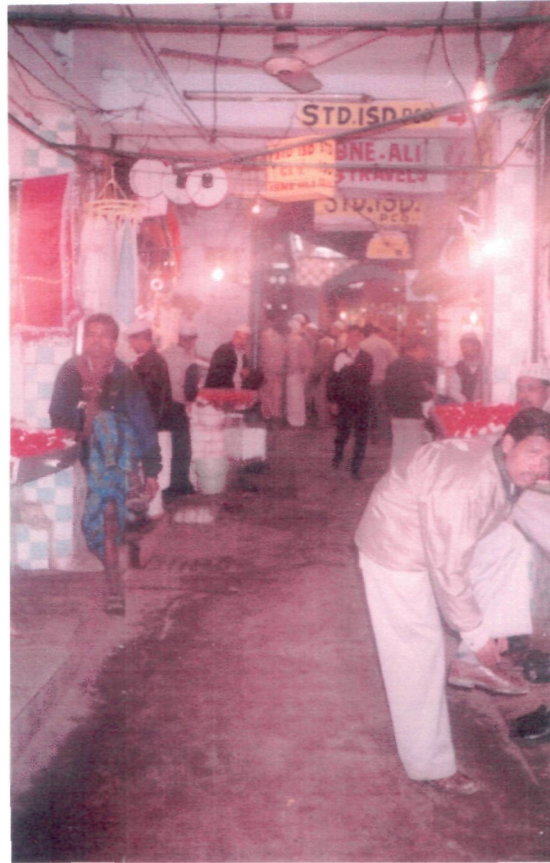


Fig. 9: Market



Fig. 10: Pilgrims leaving the premises of the shrine after prayer (Namaz)

Weekly rituals: On Thursday special programmes are organized under the surveillance of Khwaja Ahmad Nizami, Sajjada Nashin of the shrine. Pilgrims in large numbers gather at the shrine. The ceremony starts after night prayer, with the recitation of the holy verses of Quran and recite *naat khwani*, *manqabat khwani*, *halqa-e-zikr*, *muraqaba*, *salatwasalam* in the praise of Prophet Mohammad, and ends with Dua.

Namaz-e-Juma (Friday Prayer): Friday prayer is held in the Khalji Mosque.

Monthly rituals: On the 18th of every Qamari month Fatiha of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya is performed at 11 O' Clock in the morning, while pilgrims recite the Holy Quran. They offer gifts and money while paying homage to Hazrat. *Shajra khwani* (geneology) is done, it ascends naming Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya descendants of Prophet Mohammad. The function ends with Dua at 11.30 A.M. *Tabarruk* in form of sweets are distributed.

Fatiha of Hazrat Ali: On the 20th of every Qamari month, Fatiha (prayer) of Hazrat Ali is performed between evening and night prayer. Pilgrims and followers gather in large numbers, they recite Holy Qur'an, *shajra khwani* is done and the ceremony ends with Dua and distribution of sweets.

Fatiha of Baba Farid Ganj Shakar: On the 5th of every Qamari month, the Fatiha (prayer) is performed in the evening. It also starts with the

recitation of holy Qurân and then *shajra khwani* is done. The ceremony ends with Dua and the distribution of sweets.

Fatiha of Hazrat Ghous Pak: On the 11th of every Qamari month Fatiha (prayer) is performed. It has similar process by which all prayers at the shrines are performed.

Yearly rituals: The importance of yearly rituals is more, in comparison to the other celebrations and rituals. *Urs* is celebrated to mark the sad demise of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya on 18th of Rabi-us-Sani. It continues for five days on the occasion *Urs mahal* is decorated splendidly with colours, lights, Islamic flags etc, for holding programmes. Pilgrims and followers of Hazrat come from all over the country and outside the country to pay tribute. Functionaries of the shrine arrange accommodations for the pilgrims. Twenty six guest house are used for the purpose. Whereas local people invite some pilgrims to their respective home, in order to show their reverence towards them in particular and towards saint and Islam in general. Pilgrims irrespective of caste, creed, sect and religion come in large numbers at the shrine. Certain political people including Prime Minister and President have come to the shrine and have attended the celebrations out of faith or to gain political mileage. *Qawwals* come from all parts of the country and sing hymns in praise of the saints, they attempt to spell-bound and attract the pilgrims by their spiritual and devotional songs. Besides all these, renowned Ulemas (spiritual leaders) and orators are also invited at the *Urs*. The speech delivered

by the orators on this occasion is relevant and important. The subject matter of speeches are not of politics or any other general issue, sensitive issues such as Islam, *namaz* and *jihad* are taken by the orators. One has to show reverence and follow the disciplinary rules of the *Urs* ceremony women are not allowed to attend the function. Some special programmes organized on *Urs* are, All India *mushaira*, All India spiritual *tableeghi ijtema*, *jolous chader*, *Urs mahal* upto Dargah Hazrat Peer Zamin Nizami. The ceremony also has recitation of holy Quran, *halqa-e-zikr* (verse recitation), *bazm-e-nizami*, speeches, qawwalis. All India Radio broadcasts the programme of *Urs* live, from *Urs mahal*. The job of advertising and preparing invitation letter for *Urs* is done by Khwaja Ahmad Nizami, Syed Bukhari at the shrine centre. On the closing ceremony of *Urs* on 20th Rabi-us-Sani, prayer of Hazrat Ali is held. There is a popular belief that without the blessing of Hazrat Ali, the gathering and ceremony cannot attain its spiritual height.

Urs of Hazrat Ameer Khusro: Hazrat Ameer Khusro was the first disciple of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. Hazrat Ameer Khusro was the great poet of Urdu and Persian language. He is known as Tooti-e-Hind. He died on 18th Shawwal. His *Urs* is celebrated every year from 16th to 20th of Shawwal. It is celebrated with the same passion and reverence as of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya's. Huge gathering can be observed at the *Urs* of Hazrat Ameer Khusro. On the occasion *Urs mahal* is decorated and illuminated. Qawwals and orators are invited at the function. Orators deliver religious speeches. At *bazm-e-khusro*

(gathering at the Khusro's *Urs*) some special programme are held, these are, recitation of Holy Quran, *halqa-e-zikr* (recitation of holy verses), *salat wa salam*, speeches, *qawwalis*, *chadar* (sheet) ceremonies, Urdu and Hindi *mushaira*, all India spiritual *ijtima* etc. Hazrat Ahmad Nizami checks and controls all the arrangements. *Urs* programme is directly broadcasted by all India Radio and Television from *Urs mahal*.

Birth anniversary: Every year at the end of the month of Safar. Special programme is organized on the occasion of *yaum-e-wiladat* (birth) of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. Believers and pilgrims come to attend the ceremony in large numbers. The illuminated and decorated shrine looks magnificent on the occasion. Pilgrims give gifts and offering, they pay tribute to Hazrat by offering flowers and special *chadar* on the grave. Usually the door of the shrine is closed after night prayer and opened at the call of morning prayer, but on this day, the door is reopened at 2'O'clock for cleaning and washing (*ghusl*) the grave of the tomb with rose water. After washing a new and special *chadar* is put on the grave. Important Khadims have right to perform the cleaning (*khidmat*), including Khwaja Ahmad Nizami. No one is allowed to enter during this *khidmat* or cleaning. The process takes almost an hour. Then the flowers or garlands (*sej*) are put back on the grave, it may be replaced if it has worn out. Then the door is closed after morning prayer.

The tomb of Hazrat Ameer Khusro is also thoroughly cleaned. It is very striking to note that the whole year only once (during the *khidmat*) the cover (*gilaf*) is removed. After morning Prayer the pilgrims gather in large numbers in order to pay homage and tribute to the saint. They offer flowers and cloth sheet on the grave. The spectacle of *sarware kaif* can be observed everywhere. Fatiha (prayer) is done at the shrine and at night *jashn-e-wiladat* (birthday ceremony) is organized under the surveillance of the Khadim Hazrat Ahmad Nizami. *Qawwals* sing hymns in praise of saint, food is distributed through *langar khana*. Pilgrims belonging to different countries such as, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Srilanka and South Africa come to attend the ceremony and are privileged to be a part of it.

Mourning ceremony: On the 10th of the month of Moharram, the martyrs of Kerbela tragedy are revered and their sufferings are recalled by the Muslims belonging to every part of the world. They express their deep grief over the tragedy and pay tribute to Mohsin-e-Islam and *insaniyat* (humanity) Imam Husain (grandson of Prophet Mohammad). On the occasion at the shrine people mourn and proceed for a flag procession. It is observed seriously and marked with grief and respect for the martyrs of Kerbela tragedy. *Tazia* procession is also observed, on the eve of 10th Moharram (night of 9th Moharram). At the morning of 10th Fatiha of *Shohada-e-Karbela* (martyrs of Karbela) is performed which is followed by *tazia* procession extending up to Lodhi road. From there it goes to Karbela (graveyard) via tomb of

Safder Jung. The procession has several Marsia Khwans who recite elegiac verses describing Kerbela tragedy and the sufferings of the Imams. People display their profound sense of grief, they beat their chest and head. The procession has not only Muslims but people belonging to various religions such as Hindus, Sikhs and Christians, seriously participate and express their grief. At this huge procession, on roads there are facilities of drinking water and *sharbat* (sweet water). Such a huge procession especially on the roads, displays unity and integrity. At Hazrat Manzil and other places foods are distributed through *langar khana*. Special food is prepared for *nazar* (offering). During *Quran khwani* (recitation of Holy Quran) and *nazar*, women and children are not allowed. The purpose of the gathering is to give *easale-e-sawab* (spiritual benefit) to the martyrs.

Birth anniversary of Prophet Mohammad: On 12th of the month of Rabi-ul-Awwal, every year, the Eid-Milad-un-Nabi (birthday of Prophet Mohammad) is organized. A remarkable enthusiasm can be seen among the people on this day. Believers of Prophet Mohammad wear new clothes and put fragrance. They gather at *bargah-e-risalat* (gathering of believers of Prophet Mohammad). Discussion and speeches on *serat-e-pak* (character of prophet) is given and people are enlightened on the various aspect of prophet's life. After the programme of *salatwasalam* and *Quran khwani* sweets are distributed among the believers. On 12th Rabi-ul-Awwal, pilgrims do pilgrimage of *moo-e-mubarak* (hair of Prophet Mohammad). A single hair of Prophet

Mohammad is kept in the *tosha khana* of the shrine. When British invaded India, the last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar was ruling, he handed over the single hair to Sirajuddin Sahab, Sajjada Nashin who then kept it safely in the *tosha khana* of the shrine. On 12th Rabi-ul-Awwal every year the holy hair is displayed in a glass case. Pilgrims show reverence and perform pilgrimage (Fig. 11).

Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha: Like other rituals and customs observed at the shrine the festival of Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul Azha (animal sacrifice) is celebrated with great fervour and zeal. *Namaz* (prayer) of both Eids are held in Khalji mosque. The whole shrine is decorated. Pilgrims embrace and congratulate each other after *namaz*. They are happy and passionate as they consider themselves fortunate to be present at the shrine on the occasion of Eid.

Rituals Performed by the Pilgrims at the Shrine

Auliya's Tomb is always held important and centre of attraction among general people. It is so because God has said in Holy Quran "Waiaaz Kurooni az Kurukum" discuss my name and in return, I will discuss yours. It means that one who will have faith in God and will discuss his name, God will make him popular and his name will be discussed by other people. The other reason of the such a huge gathering at the shrine is that, pilgrims visit to pray and get their needs fulfilled.

The shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya is one of the distinct and important shrine of the world, where pilgrims are always present in large numbers they come from various countries, cities, and rural areas. They belong to various religion, sect, caste and creed. They often visit the shrine in groups as it is feasible and safe. Long queue of buses and vehicles can be seen around the shrine. Approximately 40000 pilgrims visit on Thursday, Friday, holidays and ceremonial days on other days the numbers are 25000. Pilgrims belonging to different age, (old, young, kids) and gender (men and women) can be seen at the shrine. Usually they are of middle and lower middle classes. They hold firm belief in the spiritual excellence of saint. They perform pilgrimage in accordance to their faith. Pilgrims experience a trance like condition when they enter the shrine, the splendour and divine manifestation makes the atmosphere sacred and pious. While passing through to the tomb of Hazrat Ameer Khusro, pilgrims pay homage to the tomb of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. Then they perform rituals by reciting Fatiha and Dua, they offer flowers, coloured cloth sheet on the holy grave, they kiss the grave in reverence and utter devotion. Women are not allowed to enter Aasthana (tomb) thus they kiss the wall and floor of it. The pilgrims pray for the fulfillment of their needs, they request Khadims and Dua Navees to pray on their behalf, with a belief that prayer made by Khadims or Dua Navees is more effective. *Nazar* on sweets is done and then it is distributed among all pilgrims especially women keep the sweets in a tray and distribute it among all

present including beggars and ask them to pray on their behalf (Fig. 12). Generally *nazar* is done in three manners. Firstly pilgrims themselves distribute the sweets of *nazar* among people secondly they put the *nazar* into boxes that are placed at different places of the shrine. Thirdly pilgrims offer cash in place of sweets to the Khadims, or Sajjada Nashin. Pilgrims seated in the verandah of Aastana recite Dua of different types like Dua of Gunj-ul-Arsh, Dua of solving problems and different verses of Quran like, Sura-e-Yaseen, Sura-e-Mulk, Sura-e-Juma, Aayat Al Kursi and Char Qul (Fig. 13). Some pilgrims, who have been suffering of physical pain, kissing a portion of *chadar* (cloth sheet) of holy grave, with a belief that the pain will be cured. Thread tying ceremony is also done, pilgrims tie thread at the gate of the shrine, so that their wish or needs get fulfilled. After visiting Hazrat Nizamuddin's tomb the pilgrims then move towards the Aastana of Hazrat Ameer Khusro. There they offer gift and perform Fatiha and pray for the fulfillment of their needs. They are cautious that while coming out of shrine their back should not be shown towards the holy grave, which could dishonour the spiritual mentor. After visiting shrines of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya and Hazrat Ameer Khusro they also visit other buildings and places of the shrine. There are many believers and lovers of these saints who due to financial or health problems are not able to visit the shrine, they at their respective homes pray for the fulfillment of their needs and solution of their problems referring to these saints and they are blessed and get favour of the saints. Some



**Fig. 11: Pilgrims attending the function of Eid-Milad-un-Nabi
(birth anniversary of Prophet Mohammad)**



Fig. 12: A lady distributing Nazam



Fig. 13: Pilgrims reciting Dua (prayer)

believers and pilgrims were interviewed and information about their belief and purpose of visiting the shrine was gathered some of them are:

Mohammad Asif of Delhi came to visit the shrine, in the discussion he revealed the purpose of visit, that he had been in problems since many days, despite of hard work, his income and saving was not good, rearing such a large family at a low wages was his major concern, thus he visited the shrine, to pray and get rid of his problems. Shabbir Ahmad one of the resident of Agra city said "My mother is ill since many years, father had already expired thus I have the responsibility of my home. I have to look after my younger brother and sister. I am going through acute financial crises thus I came here to pray for the solution of my problems" Iqtidar Ahmed have come all the way from Hyderabad he said "I am a businessman and my financial position is not good since many years. I have become bankrupt thus I have come here to get the blessings of Hazrat and to pray for the solution of my problems". Zairah Fauzia of Lucknow have come to get the blessings of Hazrat Nizamuddin, because even after five years of her marriage she is childless. One of the resident of Jammu Sarfaraz Husain said that I have come in my leisure time, to pay homage and tribute to Hazrat, it gives one mental and eternal relaxation and pleasure. Aneesullah of the state of Bihar said "I came to Delhi for some official work, so I thought I must visit the shrine, as !

have come here with a wish, to marry a girl of my choice, thus I am praying so that my wish could be fulfilled”.

Miracles Performed by Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya

Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya performed certain miracles in order to display his spiritual concern and divine manifestations. Some of the prominent miracles are:

1. Once the home of a Maulvi (Theologian) caught fire in the town of Sar Saye. All belongings including legal property papers were burnt. Hence Maulvi came to Delhi in order to get the duplicate legal papers of the property, unfortunately those papers were also lost and he eventually failed to trace it. Thus he came to Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya weeping and beating his chest. Hazrat advised him to do *nazar* of Baba Farid and bring Halwa (sweet) at once, Maulvi went to purchase it, he reached to the sweet shop and asked for Halwa, the shop keeper used papers for wrapping Halwa. Maulvi was surprised to see that the papers were his legal documents of the property. Maulvi snatched those papers from the shop keeper, and happily came back to Hazrat and narrated him how he found his papers. People and disciples sitting with Hazrat were amazed.¹⁸
2. Once a disciple of Hazrat asked him to explain what is Muridi and Piri. Hazrat did not replied. Again the disciple asked him then Hazrat asked him go to a particular direction, the disciple followed

the command and without inquiring and asking he walked all the way from Delhi and reached Lahore. The governor of Lahore knew Hazrat and was his believer, when he came to know that one of Hazrat's disciple has arrived, he gave 100 silver coins to the disciple and asked him to hand over it to Hazrat. While returning to Delhi disciple met a prostitute and fell in love with her and gave one hundred rupees he became crazy and attempt to seduce the lady but he was slapped by a divine power, the disciple felt remorse and regret, later Hazrat arranged the marriage of these two and gave them 100 silver coins as gift. Then the disciple asked Hazrat to explain Piri and Muridi. To which Hazrat replied that Muridi is that you went by my order without asking anything where you have to go and why? and I saved you from this woman and then purified this woman for you, this was the Piri.¹⁹

3. Among the rich disciples of Hazrat one had no children, he prayed and by the blessing of Hazrat a son was born. Taking the baby disciple came in the service of Hazrat, Hazrat took the baby in his hands and then on lap and torn a piece of cloth from his cloth sheet and asked the disciple and the father of the baby to make a Kurta for the baby and commanded Shaikh Makhdoom Naseeruddin Chiragh Dehli, to take responsibility of education and

learning of the child and take him as your successor. Hazrat's command was followed and later the child became a saint (Auliya) and his tomb is placed near the grave of Shaikh Makhdoom Naseeruddin's grave.²⁰

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Chapter III

Shrines of Iran

- I. *Shrine of Hazrat Abdul Azim Hasani*
- II. *Shrine of Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh*

1. Shrine of Hazrat Abdul Azim Hasani



Fig. 1: Shrine of Hazrat Abdul Azim Hasani



Fig. 2: Fence (Zarih) of Hazrat Abdul Azim Hasani

Historical Migration of Syed and Descendants of Imams in Iran

Syed's and descendants of Imams are buried in large numbers in different parts of Iran. These descendants migrated to Iran during the reign of Ummaides and Abbasids Caliphs. Some of these migrants belong to post formatible period and number of migration took place after the formatible migration of Hazrat Inam Reza who was contemporary to Mamoon the 7th Abbasids Caliph. The reason behind such migration was that Syed and descendants of Imam found Iran a safer place against the atrocities of these Caliphs.¹ They felt more independent and free in Iran. In Iran they successfully established their reputation and several followers associated themselves to them and gradually these followers and descendants constructed and turned their grave into shrine in order to pay tribute to the saint.²

Two important shrines from the view point of people and government viz. shrine of Hazrat Abdul Azim Hasani in Ray (Tehran) and the shrine of Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh in the North of Tehran are visited by pilgrims at large numbers.

Hazrat Abdul Azim Hasani

Hazrat Abdul-Azim Hasani is famous as Syed-ul-Karim³ and he is also known as Abul Qasim. He is son of Abdullah, son of Ali, son of Zaid, son of Hasan, son of Ali, son of Abu Talib. His family root reach Imam Hasan through four intermediates and reach Imam Ali finally

with five intermediates. His maternal ancestor is Hashemi, she is Lobabeh, of Bani Hashem, and daughter of Abdullah, son of Abbas, son of Abdul Mutalib.⁴

Hazrat Abdul Azim was born in Madina in the year 789 (173 A.H.). He visited Imam Reza, Imam Mohammad Taqi, and Imam Hadi, and thereafter narrated many of their tales and narrations (hadith) to his friends and followers since he was one of the grand children of Imam Hasan Mujtaba.⁵

He was a learned scholar and excellent narrator, he was also very popular, respectful and outstanding person, completely aware of Quran, its precepts and religious affairs. Much adoration about him is seen in the works of the Islamic scholars. They acknowledge him as a pious, virtuous, great and eminent narrator, with inner serenity.

Migration of Hazrat Abdul Azim: The reasons behind migration from Madina to Ray and living in a foreign land against the political and social conditions of that age was situational. Abbasid Caliphs were harsh against Imams. Among them the worst behavior was of Motevakkel Abbasi, he had severe hostility against the saint hence the shrine was completely destroyed for several times during his governorship, and he did not let the believers to do pilgrimage at the shrine.

Likewise Hazrat Abdul Azim was not safe from Caliphs rancor and enmity. They decided to kill him several times, used false

propaganda to disgrace him and make their harsh treatments legal. In this adverse and difficult time, Hazrat Abdul Azim visited Imam Hadi and expressed his religious belief to him.⁶

Imam Hadi confirmed his religious belief and considered him as one of his friends. When the caliph got the news of Hazrat Abdul Azim's meeting with Imam Hadi in Samera, he ordered officers to prosecute and arrest the former. Hence the saint disguised himself and went to different cities as a stranger. Imam Hadi selected him as a representative in Ray for conveying legal and religious affairs. The reason of this selection was based on the social and religious conditions of that age. He worked covertly for the propagation of Islam. Consequently people in different cities of Iran converge to Islam. Since then Ray became one of the important centres and residence of Muslims. Furthermore, Ray's specific geographical conditions as a blessed and productive region gave it undue importance.

Hazrat Abdul Azim came to Ray as a stranger and stayed in a locality of Muslim's in Sarebanan district at Sacatulmavali alley. He rarely left home. During the day he fasted and at night he worshiped God.

Many people got to know the presence of Hazrat Abdul Azim, and visited him and followed his narrations and scientific knowledge. He answered social, religious queries and religious jurisprudence eagerly. People considered his words as of Imam Hadi's.

Hazrat Abdul Azim was ill in the last days of his life, on one of those days he saw a dream which predicted future events. A noble Muslim dreamed Prophet Mohammad saying "one of my blood kin will die in Sacatulmavali war tomorrow, Muslims will attend the funeral, and will be buried in Abdul Jabbar's garden near apple tree". Therefore the noble muslim bought the garden in order to confer the honour of burying one of Mohammad's kin. Since Abdul Jabbar had dreamed the same dream, he understood the heavenly secret of these two dreams, so he gifted the garden for Hazrat Abdul Azim's grave in order to share the honour.

Hazrat Abdul Azim died on the same day, Shawwal 15th, 252 A.H. People expressed their grief. When his followers were giving bath to him ceremonially, they found a paper in his pocket on which he had written his pedigree as following:

I am Abul Qasim, son of Abdullah, son of Ali, son of Zaid, son of Hasan, son of Ali, son of Abu Talib.⁷

Hazrat Abdul Azim was highly respected by the contemporary imams and saints, and had a special popularity. Firstly because of his humanity, and secondly of his religious and scientific rank hence many narrators and scientists have mentioned him as a great scientist. For example, Saheb, son of Ibad, a great Islamic scholar of fourth century writes about the saint's ethical, and scientific personality "he was a pious and virtuous person, and was famous for his truth and honesty." He was aware of religious affairs, he believed

in justice and unification of God strongly and delivered many religious narrations. Ahmad, son of Khalid Barqii, author of "Mohasen", a religious book introduced Hazrat Abdul Azim as a high ranking narrator and writes about him. His virtue and honesty in conveying the religious points is reliable and satisfactory. A noted scholar, Nasabeh Syed Jaffar Arassi Najafi Husaini writes: Hazrat Abdul Azim Hasani is a great Syed, pious, virtuous who has innumerable ethical virtues.⁶

Works of Hazrat Abdul Azim: Hazrat Abdul Azim received knowledge from three Imams and learned eighty narrations and thereafter preached in different places. Besides these narrations he has writings attributed to him. One of the famous book is "Youm and Leileh" (day and night), its contents are the duties of being a Muslim and the precepts of day and night.

History of the Shrine

The first race arrived at Ray were Aryans who thereafter moved to Iran nearly in 1800 B.C. Ray is one of the oldest cities of Iran. It has been called as Ragha. This city was the capital in 150 B.C, and after the arrival of Islam in Ray the city was known as Shaikulbelad.⁹ Ray is located at the South of Tehran, and lies in one of its suburbs.

Hazrat Abdul Azim Hasani was buried in Abdul Jabbar's garden, one of the Ray's residential area, many followers revived his memory, paid homage to him by constructing a sepulcher over the grave. Later a dome was built during the reign of Al-e-Booyeh, they propagated Islam and ruled over south and west of Iran and Iraq,

modified the construction and paid homage to the saint.

Ray was one of the important cultural, political and commercial centres during the reign of Al-e-Booyeh. Saheb, son of Ibad a famous poet, writer and scientist, whose ministry was in Ray, gave special attention to the importance of the shrine.

Some basic repairs was done on Hazrat Abdul Azim's dome during the reign of Saljoghian. Initially the dome was made of bricks but in the reign of Nasiruddin Shah Quajar, it was ornamented with 13000 gold pieces. Its height is of 14 metres.

Fence of the shrine: The first wooden fence of Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine was placed on the grave during the reign of Shah Tahmasb Safavi. The fence prevented people to reach the grave. Later Fatah Ali Shah Quajar replaced it by silver. Thereafter some basic changes were made during the reign of Nasiruddin Shah Quajar some verses of Quran and poems were written on it. It was modified in 1942 and 472 kg of silver was used. A wooden box is placed near the grave which has historical significance. It has Quranic verses and narrations written on its four respective sides. Khwaja Najmuddin Mohammad, one of the minister gifted this box in 1324.

This box is 2.58 metres long, 1.5 metres wide and 1.20 metres high. Its pillars and different parts are made of precious walnut and lute.

Physical Description of the Shrine

The porches of the shrine: Since two offsprings of Imam Zadeh are buried near Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine¹⁰, it has various porches ornamented with mirror, tiles and patch work. Pilgrims use these porches for praying, reading holy books, meditating and resting. Religious leaders also use these porches to deliver sermons on the martyrs of Karbela. Pilgrims listen these sermons attentively. These porches are also suitable for different prayers, such as: Kmail, Nodbeh and Ashura. Especially in Moharram and Ramadan these prayers have much glory and benefit.

Eastern porch: This porch was built during the reign of Shah Tahmasb Safavi in 1537, in which shrine's main door was placed. Windows a memoir of the previous reign are still there. When north porch was built its entrance was changed into a mosque and ladies porch, but now it is again used for exit and enter.

Southern porch: There is a porch in the South of the shrine which connects the shrine to Imam Zadeh Hamzeh. There is an alley between these two shrines in the original building, probably the shrines were connected to each other by a porch during the reign of Safavieh.

Northern porch: This porch is located between Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine and north porch. Now it is the entrance door of the shrine. It is centrally separated by an iron wall for the entry of men and women,

men enter from the right, and women enter from the left side. The exact date of construction is unknown, and there is no evidence and document about it.

Western porch: There is a big porch in the Western part of the shrine, through which pilgrims enter to the shrine of Imam Zadeh Hamzeh. Having been added the grave of Nasiruddin Shah Quajar to this part, it has become important. It is decorated with mirrors, and is specifically used for the entry and exit of men, and now it is a place for collective prayer. The basic construction of this porch was done during the reign of Quajarieh, but it was decorated after Islamic revolution in 1979.

North porch and its minarets: This porch was built by Mirza Agha Khan Noori, the famous chancellor during the reign of Quajarieh. It was decorated by mirrors beautifully. It is of 12.5 metres high from the level of courtyard. Shoes are kept on two respective places. The right one is for men and the left one for women. There are two splendid minarets 16.5 metres height, decorated with tiles, in two sides of the north porch. These two minarets were built during the reign of Nasiruddin Shah Quajar. It is now used by a muezzin for calling people to prayer.

The courtyards of the shrine: Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine has three courtyards viz.:

The big courtyard: This courtyard is located at the north part of shrine

and is a place for the entrance and exit of pilgrims. It was built during the reign of Nasiruddin Shah Quajar. It is surrounded to the North by a market, to the South by Abdul Azim's shrine, and to the West by the longitudinal garden and western courtyard.

The courtyard of longitudinal garden: This courtyard comprises a school for religious scholars and presently it is closed. The nobles and aristocrats are buried in this courtyard by paying money to Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine (100 million Rials/US\$ 11100 for each grave). Selling land for the burial of the dead is good source of income.

Western courtyard: This courtyard is located in the western part of the shrine. It is bounded to the North by the longitudinal garden, to the West by newly built religious school and to the East by sacred places. As it has grave of Nasiruddin Shah Quajar hence it was called as Nasiri courtyard, but now it is known as Ayatullah Kashani.

Mosque: This mosque is located in the North part of the courtyard. The exact date of the construction is unknown, but it was repaired in 1818. It has two floors, the lower floor is used during winter, and the upper floor for summer. The daily prayers are performed in congregation and mourning ceremonies are held in the month of Moharram.

Library: Hazrat Abdul Azim's library was established during the reign of Shah Tahmasb Safavi. It has been rendering services since one hundred years to people who are interested in reading books. At

present there are about 40000 volumes of books and periodical publications in Persian, Arabic, English, French, German, and Russian languages. The subjects include: holy Quran, religious books, dictionaries, literature, biography, criticism, religious jurisprudence, narrations, mysticism, history, geography, travelogue, philosophy, logic, education, social sciences, linguistics, mathematics, astronomy, computer sciences, physics, mechanics, chemistry, medical sciences, natural sciences, arts, etc.

At present this library has 8600 members, it has important books and magazines, it has also two separate reading rooms for women and men. The whole library is computerized and provides better services to the members. The library functions from 8 AM to 8 PM daily and kept open on holidays (Fig. 3).

Museum: From the very beginning of the construction of the shrine some precious items were dedicated by people and governors. These items as well as belongings of saint are preserved in this museum. The oldest record about Hazrat Abdul Azim's museum was related to Shah Tahmasb Safavi.

One can see valuable and precious items in this museum. Its substructure is about 4049 m², there is also an iron door in the museum which belongs to the reign of Saljoghian. It is about 1000 years old, on which an inscription is written in Kufic script. Wood work was done in 1444, coincided with the reign of Shahrukh Teimoori,



Fig. 3: Library

precious manuscripts of Quran, some of which are more than 1000 years old, precious carpets, various tableaux of different ages of Iranian reigns are main content of the museum attracting people by large.

Clinic: Shrine's clinic was built in 1983 to provide medical and general services to the poor and pilgrims. Presently this clinic is working with the substructure of 2665 m². It has specialized departments such as: ophthalmology, radiotherapy, surgery, medicine, urology, orthopaedics, pediatrics, psychiatry, obstetrics and gynaecology, radio-diagnosis, dentistry, pathology, vaccination rooms and drugstores are the essential parts of the clinic. This clinic comprises of twenty six doctors and fifteen specialists, nurses and office personnel.

The services for students, orphans and the poor are free and general concession is given to other people with respect to their financial status. During the year more than 120000 patients visited the clinic (Fig. 4).

Faculty of narration sciences (Hadith): The whole expense of this faculty is met by the shrine. This faculty began its activity as a non-profitable organization, with a formal licence of sublime council of cultural revolution in 2000 to educate narrators, researchers and linguists.

The substructure of this faculty is 20000 m². It functions educationally and scientifically with twenty three classrooms, two

meeting halls, computer centre, English laboratories, specialized library with the capacity of 250000 volume of books, reading rooms and astronomy centre.

At present there are 250 students enrolled (male and female) who are studying in B.A and M.A classes. There are twenty teaching staff who are serving in this faculty. Hostels (separate for male and female), food, entertainment, health care are also provided and no money is charged from the students (Fig. 5).

Borhanieh school: It is one of the oldest Islamic school which is still working, its exact date of construction is unknown, but works and evidences betrays that it was repaired during the reign of Agha Mohammad Khan Quajar. The management of this school is under the supervision of Abdul Azim's shrine, about 110 students (male and female) study in this school. Ethics, philosophy, Arabic conversation, calligraphy and Persian literature are taught in this school. Education is free, other facilities including hostel, food and health care expenses are borne by shrine and religious authorities.

Hozeh Elmieh school: This Islamic school was built near Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine after Islamic revolution of Iran in 1979. Students are trained for Islamic teaching, criticism of Quran, history and foreign languages. This school has enrolled 305 students (male and female) and has twenty six experienced teachers. Education is free. The charges of hostels, food, health care and entertainment are met by the



Fig. 4: Clinic



Fig. 5: Faculty of narration sciences (Hadith)

shrine and religious authorities.

Quran learning centre: This centre has various levels of teaching Quran for students of different ages to memorize, by heart (Tajvid). Till now more than 40000 students have taken training from the centre.

Other activities of this centre: Meeting for familiarity with the various aspects of Quran, sponsoring and inviting people proficient in Quran and eulogist from various places and countries especially from Egypt and Malaysia.

Educational and cultural complex: Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine has specified 40000 m² of land to educate the poor and talented students. Students have to qualify a test for the admission in preschool, there are 233 students enrolled in school, and 248 students in guidance school of this complex with the best educational facilities, and experienced teachers. Education in this school is free and the expenses are met by the shrine.

Education office: This office was established to educate personnel and staff employees and their children. Different subjects taught are Islamic teaching, ethics, office affairs, English, specialized education and sociability with the pilgrims. There are some educational facility for the personnel's children to spend their leisure time during the summer, such as critical study of Quran and its aspects, vocational courses such as shooting, calligraphy, drawing, tailoring, and sports such as football, volleyball and table tennis. In summer 2004, 165

students have received training in the above fields by experienced instructors (Fig. 6).

Qarzulhasaneh Islamic bank: It is in the Western courtyard of the shrine. This bank started functioning with six personnel in the year of 1979. It was initially supported by the shrine. This bank gives preference to the personnel and shopkeepers around the shrine. It also gives interest free loan to the people connected to the shrine.

Meeting halls: Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine has two nice and big halls, with substructure of 4624 m², with the capacity of accommodating 900 people. These two halls are called Shaikh Sadooqh and Shaikh Kolaini. They are used for religious ceremonies, mournings and seminars. The expenses are met by the shrine.

Shabistan (resting part of the shrine): There are small rooms around the courtyards of the shrine, these rooms are meant for the pilgrims to take rest and spend their leisure time (Fig. 7).

Darolziafeh (dining hall): Food is cooked in this kitchen on different occasions such as Moharram, Fatimid, Ramadan (fasting month) and distributed among the poor and pilgrims. The expenses are met by the shrine. On ordinary days food is cooked in the kitchen for the personnel. The substructure of this dining hall is of 2941 m², with the capacity of accommodating 800 people (Fig. 8 & 9).

Astronomy centre: It is one of the most equipped educational and research centres for propagating religious sciences and reviving



Fig. 6: Children of office employees attending the class



Fig. 7: Pilgrims resting in Shabistan



Fig. 8: Darolziafeh (dining hall)



Fig. 9: Kitchen

astronomy and giving various scientific and educational knowledge to the needy youth in Ray. The substructure of the astronomy central building is of 250 m² and has two observatory, specialized libraries, photographic laboratory, calendar centre, computer centre and audio-visual lab. Students and research scholars of universities visit this centre every week. The expenses of this centre are met by Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine.

Graves near the shrine: There are many graves of scientists, politicians and religious personalities near the shrine. The most important one include the grave of Imam Zadeh Hamzeh, son of Imam Moosa Kazim. There is a famous anecdote that which tells Hazrat Abdul Azim use to visit a grave every day and one said "this is the grave of one of the children of Imam Moosa Kazim".

The graves of Imam Zadeh Taher and Mutahar: Imam Zadeh Taher and his son Mutahar are buried in the Northeastern part of Abdul Azim's courtyard. Imam Zadeh Taher is pious and scientist and his family root reach Imam Zainul Abedeen with eight intermediates. Many pilgrims visit his grave.

The grave of Abul Fatah Razi: He is one of the famous scientist of Islamic world. His grave lies in the Eastern part of Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine. Several famous books are attributed to him such as Rouz-al-Janan in Tafsir-al-Quran and also a valuable interpretation of Quran in 13 volumes.

The grave of Abul Qasim Kalantari Tehrani: He was an eminent scientist, a good researcher and an outstanding jurist. His important work is *Taghrirat Dar Osoul*. He died in 1878, and was buried near Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine.

There are so many graves of religious and political personalities and of poets near Abdul Azim's shrine, for example: the grave of *Mohammad Husain Tonkaboni*, one of the teachers of religious school, *Shaikh Mohammad Ali Shah Abadi*, a famous mystic and jurist, *Syed Abul Qasim Kashani* a religious leader who fought against colonization, *Shaikh Zabiullah Mahallati* a teacher of Islamic school and *Nasiruddin Shah Quajar* who was killed in Abdul Azim's shrine, *Jeiran Sogoli* wife of *Nasiruddin Shah Quajar*, *Ali Reza Khan Quajar*, regent during the reign of *Quajar*, *Nima Youshij* and *Ghaani*, famous poets of Iran are buried in Abdul Azim's shrine.

Organizations of the shrine: Research centre of Dar-ul-Hadith in Ghom: The centre of the scientific and cultural organization was established in the year of 1995, under the supervision of the officials of the shrine, to introduce, educate, and propagate the narrations of Prophet Mohammad. This organization is funded by the shrine. Duties of this centre include:

1. Research on subjects and sciences of narration, its aim is to defend and refine the narration.
2. Propagate knowledge and narrations.

3. Compile new narrative books.
4. Educate researcher in different narration sciences.

Till now more than seventy research papers have been published in the above areas. In this centre three publications of narration sciences, narration of life and heritage of narration is available.

Specialized library of Islamic teaching: This library is in Ghom and its whole expenditure is provided by Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine. This library has 25000 printed and stone impressions, 400 manuscripts, 800 photographic transcriptions, 150 narration thesis, and more than 100 publications with different titles. This library has 3000 members. It is open everyday except holidays.

Dar-ul-Hadith publication centre: This centre was established in 1996. This centre is a good source of income and it is used for the developmental and reconstructive affairs of the shrine. Till now more than 2000 books and Journals are published in this centre.

Economical activities of the shrine: Since there are no financial and governmental sources for the shrine, Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine began its economical activities in different fields to enhance its income and to implement developmental plans and to participate in social and economical development of the country. Following are the source of income of the shrine:

Commercial part: Till now this part has imported more than 800000

tons of primary material from industries, and it has exported products except petroleum.

The manufacturing industrial part: This part is responsible for manufacturing products for the spinning and weaving factory with the measurement of 52000 m². This factory produces 2500 tons of string and 6000000 m² of various stuffs every year.

The establishment of agricultural part: Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine has done great work for the exploitation of the agricultural endowed lands and husbandry affairs, some of them include: Cultivating 350 hectares of various crops, such as wheat, corn, vegetables. Cultivating 78800 pistachio tree at 196 hectares and cultivating saffron in 4 hectares.

Other activities have been done in the field of gardening: The garden has more than 500 tons of fresh fruit which are desirable for export.

The reconstructive part: 205516m² of land, 258007m² of building includes 1780 residential and office units and 1056 commercial units have been established by imitation of reconstructive company which is dependant on Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine. They are called Rezvan residential project, Javanmard Ghassab residential and commercial project, Soleimanieh residential project, Gholha residential and commercial project, and office and commercial project of Ray's great market. Some of these suits are given to the shrine's employees and to the poor on a lower price. Office and commercial projects are sold or rented to the applicants to be a source of income for the shrine.

Endowments of the shrine: The endowments are classified in to two groups:

1. The endowments which were donated to the shrine from the time when Hazrat Abdul Azim was buried till the reign of Shah Tahmasb Safavi.
2. Those items which were added to the shrine during the reign of Shah Tahmasb Safavi, and after him.

The total number of endowed farms were sixteen, they were located around Ray, Shemiran, Shahryar the suburbs of Tehran, but gradually some of them were seized because of the political confusion and mismanagement of the shrine. Now only eight farms are there. They are Aliman, Alaeen, Dehkheer, Sink, Hosseneh, Khelzerir, Maftan, and Khoraeen. These farms have 2000 hectares of agricultural and gardening lands. Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine also has 500 commercial units and 6000 residential suits in different parts of Ray and Tehran. Two hundred shops in the main street of the shrine and Ray's old market are among endowments of Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine.¹¹

All tenants rent these gardens, farms, shops, residential and commercial units, and pay their rent to Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine monthly or yearly. In the year of 2003 the whole income of shrine's endowments were 5800000000 Rials (US \$644000) (Fig. 10).

Officials and Important Functionaries Related to the Shrine

They are divided into two groups:

1. Directly, 2. Indirectly

1. Directly: They rely on the shrine occupationally and financially and are considered as permanent employees of the shrine. They receive wages from the shrine every month.
2. Indirectly: These people are totally dependent on the resources by visiting pilgrims.

Those who rely on the shrine directly include:

Mutawallis: Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine is very large and comprises many organizations. Senior Mutawalli is selected by the leader of Islamic Republic of Iran. He has eight assistants, each is responsible for a specific part, and many persons work under the control of these Mutawallis. They include coordination and administrative assistant, office and financial assistant, economics assistant, international and public relations assistant, cultural assistant, sacred places assistant, therapeutic assistant, and reconstructive assistant.

These Mutawallis perform the following duties:

1. Checking offices, dealing day to day affairs, financial, welfare, health and therapeutic affairs, collecting money of the shrine's fence, charity boxes, endowments, economical companies of the shrine, financial participations of the shrine in producing

agricultural as well as other products.

2. Checking the constructions of the buildings and sacred places, blacksmiths, installations, plumbers, carpentry, tailoring, gardening organizations etc.
3. Having coordination with working organization which are related to the shrine or with foreign organizations.

Khadims: Khadims of Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine are those persons who work in the porches of the shrine. They are 120 in numbers and are divided into male and female. Male Khadims work in male part and female Khadims work in female part. They work in three shifts from morning (after morning prayer) till 11 P.M. Their duties include cleaning the surroundings, guiding the pilgrims, answering their queries, and solving their difficulties mainly about distributing the charities. Sixty honorary members also work in the shrine for several hours and days without any honorarium.

Disciplinary officers: There are 90 disciplinary officers (men and women) in the shrine. They often do their duties in the courtyards and in front of the exit and entrance doors. They work in three shifts. They maintain discipline and prevent the crowd in specific part, guide pilgrims to the courtyards and different parts of the shrine, and explain them about rules of the shrine.

Ferashes (servants): There are 42 Ferashes in Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine who work in three shifts. Their duties include cleaning different

parts of the shrine, sweeping, washing, washing carpets, and covering different floors with carpets.

Shoe keepers: There are 46 shoe keepers in Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine, who work in three shifts, men shoe keepers keep men shoes and women shoe keepers keep women shoes, and give them a receipt. There are also several honorary members who work some hours or days in the shrine (Fig. 11).

Those who rely on the shrine indirectly include:

Roza Khans (preachers): They sit in the porches of the shrine every afternoon, especially on Thursday and Friday afternoons, because there are more pilgrims in the shrine on these days. Some pilgrims pay their debts to complete their needs as to solve their problems by giving money to a preacher and want him to elegize which is usually about Imam Husain's sufferings in Karbela. They arouse pilgrims emotions, and finally Roza Khans pray for pilgrims needs and their problems to be solved and vows to be accepted.

Eulogists: They elegize in various mourning ceremonies with sad and happy poems and eulogies. They are invited by Mutawallis and in return they receive money.

Dua Navees (writer of prayer): They sit in the markets, some pilgrims who have problems, approach to them, and they write prayer and pray on behalf of them. In return pilgrims give some money to them and get satisfaction.



Fig. 10: Endowment shops



Fig. 11: Shoe keeper

Markets: There are many small, big, new and old markets around Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine. These shops are functioning from the days of their ancestors. Before visiting the shrine, pilgrims go to these markets to purchase necessary items like veil, head dress (Rosary), prayer rug, candles, and charities and then visit the shrine. After returning from shrine they again visit these markets to purchase some gifts for their families and relatives as cookies, chocolates, sweets, Jewelleries, clothes, stuff, head dress, prayer rug etc (Fig. 12).

Vendors: There are many vendors in markets and allies around Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine. They sell some items to the pilgrims as sweets, chocolates, decorated items, artificial Jewelleries, candles, lute and perfumes. These vendors do not have a specific place, and move around the shrine area.

Beggars: Men, women and children beg in markets, and streets around the shrine. Some beggars are blind and paralytic, and show their faulty limb or hands to arouse pilgrim's sympathy. Pilgrims give some money to them to increase the heavenly reward of their pilgrimage.

Another group which relies on the shrine indirectly: A number of other facilities are provided to pilgrims in form of restaurants, hotels, banks, offices, post office, telephone, taxi services and travel agencies.

Administration of the Shrine

Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine is controlled by twelve board of trustees, several religious and local reliable persons and a representative who is selected by the leader of Islamic Republic of Iran. He is called Mutawalli the head of board of trustees. He has eight assistants with specific duties, such as coordination and administrative assistant, office and financial assistant, economics assistant, international and public relations assistant, cultural assistant, sacred places assistant, therapeutic assistant and reconstructive assistant. For accomplishing the programmes, each assistant performs his own duties.

Among the mentioned assistants, whose one of the members of their family had been recently the shrine's employee, have priority over others to be among the board of trustees and work in different parts of the shrine.

Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine is functioning independently and not under the control of any organization or ministry. It's income is provided by collecting money of the shrine's boxes, endowments and selling the graves in the courtyards of the shrine. Activities of commercial, agricultural, reconstructive and producing parts are also another sources of income, these incomes are spent on the affairs of the shrine in accordance to the decisions and controls of board of trustees.

Rituals and Ceremonies of the Shrine

Different rituals and ceremonies are performed by Khadims and Mutawallis they include:

Daily rituals: Khadims wear special clothes before *Aazan* (calling to prayer) everyday. They wait till the senior Khadim opens the main door, then they enter and after reciting *Fatiha* (praying for the dead) and reciting peace upon Prophet Mohammad and his family, they stand on their own place to perform their duties. After cleaning the items and belongings of the shrine, they maintain discipline and guide the pilgrims. Daily prayers are performed in mosque in which khadims and pilgrims participate (Fig. 13). After noon prayer, usually there are some rituals for the commemoration of the martyrs of Karbela (Imam Husain, his family and his followers). Pilgrims listen to the eulogists mournfully. Another ritual which is performed by Khadims is the lightening of lamps (*cheragh*).

It has been a tradition for hundred years in which some Khadims replace each other, and the senior Khadim recite some verses of Quran. All the pilgrims leave the shrine at 11 O'clock at night. Khadims close the doors respectfully and lastly, the senior Khadim closes the main door.

Weekly rituals: Ashura (the tenth day of Moharram) prayer: It is performed at 7 O'clock in the morning on every Monday, it is about the commemoration of Imam Husain and his followers in Karbela. Pilgrims



Fig. 12: Market



Fig. 13: Pilgrims offering prayer (Namaz)

recite it and then they are received warmly with bread, cheese, tea and dates.

Komail prayer: It is another prayer which is performed in Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine on every Thursday. Employees and pilgrims recite it. At the end of the ritual, people are offered tea, bread and dates.

Nodbeh prayer: It is performed in Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine in the morning every Friday. It is about the commemoration of Prophet Mohammad and his family. At the end of the ritual they are offered bread and dates.

Friday prayer: This prayer is performed in Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine on every Friday noon, in which pilgrims, Khadims, employees, and Ray's residents participate, and listen to the sermons (orations) of Imam.

There are also some rituals on Friday afternoon every week in which many pilgrims participate to recite Quran and to pray for the dead (Fatiha), many outstanding native and foreign scholars (Qari) of Quran are invited to this ritual.

Monthly rituals: On the last day of every solar month (Maha-Shamsi) Khadims clean or perform dusting ritual (*ghobar rubi*) at Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine in front of board of trustees. At first they collect the shrine's money and put them in special bags. Then they clean the items of the shrine's fence such as grave's box, mirrors, lamps, flower pots, Quran, then they wash the shrine's fence with rose water, at the

end of the ritual, khadims count money in front of the board of trustees and deposit them in the account of Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine.

Recitation of Quran, praising for Prophet Mohammad and Hazrat Ali, Hazrat Abdul Azim and another rituals are performed at the beginning of every lunar month, in which Khadims, employees and pilgrims participate. If a person has a vow, he will distribute his charities among the poor and pilgrims at the end of the ritual.

Yearly rituals: The birthday anniversary of Hazrat Abdul Azim falls on the fourth day of Rabi-us-Sani. Khadims and Mutawallis arrange festive ceremonies. The whole courtyards and porches of the shrine are decorated with green stuffs, coloured ribbons, flowers, and lights. Eulogist read some poems and eulogies about Prophet Mohammad and Hazrat Abdul Azim's personality. Pilgrims participate in this ceremony, and they are offered sweets, syrup (sharbat) and cookies.

Hazrat Abdul Azim's death anniversary: It falls on 15th Shawwal. Khadims cover the whole courtyards and porches of the shrine with dark ribbons as a symbol of lamentation. Pilgrims and employees elegize and preachers sing some poems about Hazrat Abdul Azim's personality and his deeds, and also pray for Prophet Mohammad.

Birth anniversary of Prophet Mohammad: All parts of the shrine are decorated with green stuffs, coloured ribbons, flowers, and lights during this day, festive ceremony is arranged, in which eulogists and poets recite some eulogies about Prophet Mohammad, and people

pray (recite peace upon Prophet Mohammad). Khadims and employees of the shrine receive the pilgrims and others warmly. Syrup and cookies is distributed at the end of the ceremony. People kiss and congratulate each other after leaving the ceremony.

Prophet Mohammad's death anniversary: Various parts of the shrine are covered with dark stuffs during this day. Khadims and employees wear dark clothes as a symbol of mourning, and participate in mourning parties, listen to eulogies, and pray for Prophet Mohammad.

Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha: Eid-ul-Fitr is the festival at the end of fasting month Ramadan and Eid-ul-Azha is a day of sacrifice. The whole shrine is decorated with lights in these two great Islamic eves. Pilgrims wear new and clean clothes and perform Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha prayers only on these two days respectively. Pilgrims and others meet warmly, they kiss and congratulate each other after the prayers. They offer syrup, cookies and sweets.

Eid-ul-Qadeer Khum (a festival in the memory of Hazrat Ali): The whole shrine is decorated with lights, and eulogists recite some eulogies on this happy day. People are received warmly with syrup, sweets and cookies on this auspicious day.

Moharram and Safar months: Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine is covered with dark stuffs during these months. Pilgrims especially male and different parties come to Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine from Ray, Tehran, and near villages to participate in *majlis* from the beginning till

the tenth of Moharram, especially on Tasua and Ashura (the ninth and tenth day of Moharram), they mourn and elegize. Mourning meetings about the martyrdom of Imam Husain is held. The food is distributed during day and night among poor and pilgrims. During these days, if a person has a vow, he will distribute charities among the pilgrims. The above mentioned rituals are also performed on Arbaeen (40 days after the martyrdom of Imam Husain, his family and his followers).

Ramadan (fasting month): Ramadan is a month in which God gifted Quran to Muslims. Muslims read Quran each day during the month and finish the whole Quran within the month. During the month *Sahri*¹² and *Aftar*¹³ are arranged for poor and pilgrims.

There are also some mourning ceremonies for the death of Imams. Khadims and Mutawallis cover the whole parts of Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine with black cloth, and they wear black clothes as a sign of mourning, and people console each other.

Rituals Performed by the Pilgrims at the Shrine

Pilgrims of different age, sex and social status approximately 30000 come to Abdul Azim's shrine on Thursday, Friday and holidays and ceremonial days. On other days approximately 20000 come for pilgrimage to shrine daily. Majority of them are from lower and middle classes. Pilgrims of various countries such as India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq and Lebanon, visit the shrine (Fig. 14).

At first pilgrims recite prayers with the intention to enter the shrine, they wear clean clothes, and respect the shrine humbly when they see the shrine's dome and minarets from a far distance. Ladies cover themselves with a veil to enter the shrine. If they do not have a veil, they borrow it from the Khadims, otherwise they will not be allowed to enter the shrine. Pilgrims recite some prayers at the courtyards of the shrine. They give their shoes to the shoe keeper in front of the main door. They kiss the entrance door and the fence of the shrine, and thereafter recite some verses of Quran and pray for Prophet Mohammad.

All pilgrims turn around half part of the shrine's fence¹⁴ and pay their debts by dedicating some money to the shrine (Fig. 15). Some times this money is given in form of aid. Some pilgrims perform pilgrimage or vow prayer, they sit in different porches of the shrine and recite Suras of Quran, like Sura-e-Yaseen, Sura-e-Mulk, Ayat Al Kursi, Char Qul, Wa An Yakad and Ganj-ul-Arsh prayer and pray for the fulfillment of their needs. Some pilgrims perform their daily prayers collectively, a group of them sit silently in different porches and corners of the shrine and meditate about their problems, ethical and spiritual affairs. Others resort to shrine for praying, tying threads, and lock on the fence of the shrine.

Pilgrims *nazar* in different ways to get their needs fulfilled for example they put some money to the holes of shrine's fence or put some money in the boxes of the shrine. They may also dedicate some



Fig. 14: Foreign pilgrims



Fig. 15: Pilgrims at the fence (Zarih)

items as carpet, chandelier, veil, wall clock, gold, curtain, salt, lamps, fruits and cooked food.

Pilgrims also distribute their charities (*nazar*) among pilgrims in different courtyards of the shrine. The items like socks, shirts, veils, cookies, dried fruits, Halwa, Kachi, pottage, chocolates, syrup, breads, cheese, fruits and salts etc (Fig. 16).

These charities are distributed on Thursday and in the afternoon on Friday as people believe that the spirit of the dead is free in these two days and comes to this world to visit their relatives and secondly because Thursday and Friday are holidays and people have more time to visit such places. People believe that it is best method for distribution of goods to reach needy and some believe that since these charities are distributed in the shrine, so they are sacred for pilgrims.

Some pilgrims were interviewed in order to gather information about the purpose of their visit to the shrine.

Mohammad Salehi a visitor from Tehran told "my old mother has been ill for several months. Medical cure was not effective, so I have come to this place to visit Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine and seek blessings from him to cure my mother and comfort her."

Ibrahim Eskandarzadeh with his family have come to this place from Arak, he said "I am married since thirteen years, and have many children. All these years I have been tenant and changed my house



Fig. 16: A pilgrim distributing Nazar

more than ten times. I draw a meager salary, my dream is to own a personal house.”

Mahmood Allah yari from Ray said “I was unemployed for several months, I found a job in a company, thereafter I got married and now I have a child. The company in which I was working went bankrupt and I lost my job. I am ashamed of my family. I have been coming to this shrine on every Thursday and Fridays since the last one month and I have vowed a little money for finding a job, because I heard that Hazrat Abdul Azim is generous and who visits the particular shrine, his desires and needs are fulfilled.”

Hasan Abdullah and his family from Iraq had come to Hazrat Abdul Azim’s shrine. He said “we have been here for 20 days firstly for the sake of the pilgrimage and secondly relatives and countrymen in Iraq are going through adversities. Our country has been invaded by the foreign forces. In some parts of the country, there is a civil war. We have come here to pray for the restoration of peace and harmony of our country.”

Raana Barati from Tehran said “I have two sons, they are above 30 years of age, and they do not wish to marry and waste their time unnecessarily. I have come to this shrine and distributed some cookies among pilgrims and wanted Hazrat Abdul Azim to solve my problem to make my sons agreed for marriage. My financial condition is good and I have promised after fulfilling my desire. I will visit again

to provide necessary goods for the shrine.”

Kobra jalali with her daughter had come to the shrine, from Shiraz she said “my daughter had been married for two years and has a child. Presently her relationship with her husband is not good. Now she is living with us without her child, thus we have come to this shrine to pray for the restoration of prosperity and return of past happiness.”

Narges Ehsanee with her husband had come to the shrine from Karaj, she said “we have come to this shrine for the sake of pilgrimage and also to pray for having a child. We have been married since four years, and have a happy life, but our desire is to have a child for a better life. I had two abortions. According to doctors I will be able to conceive a child by medical treatments, so we expect that our hope will be fulfilled with the wishes of Hazrat”.

At the end of this part we should add that in besides pilgrimage (the most important reason of pilgrims coming to Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine), paying their debts to the shrine, telling their difficulties to Hazrat Abdul Azim, pilgrims also go on pilgrimage to the tombs of Imam Zadeh Hamzeh, Imam Zadeh Taher and Mutahar, near Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine, and the graves of other distinguished personalities who are resting in peace near Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine, we spend some time and pray for them.

At the end of the pilgrimage, pilgrims leave Hazrat Abdul Azim's

shrine comfortably because of doing a good religious deed, and they hope to visit again to the shrine after completing their wishes.

Miracles Pertaining to the Shrine

Some famous miracles attributed to the shrine are:

1. Hadi khan an employee of Tehran railway fell into a fit of an epilepsy, his body became motionless as a loath of meat and blistered completely. His illness lasted for several months and there was no hope for his survival. He requested his families to take him to Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine. They took him to the shrine. They prayed the whole night, then he slept and dreamed Hazrat Abdul Azim, who asked him to leave the shrine and visit again on Friday night. He left the shrine and came back on Friday night, again the family members prayed the whole night, Hadi Khan again dreamed Hazrat Abdul Azim in which he saw him requesting Prophet Mohammad to cure Hadi Khan, Prophet Mohammad asked Hadi to stand up and said "you are physically fit". Hadi Khan woke up and found himself totally fit. Hence he arranged a grand party and illuminated the shrine for three consecutive nights.¹⁵
2. Because of the carelessness of a driver, Mohammad, the consignment receipt of Aali Nasab factory's load was lost by a shop keeper in 1964. For this negligence driver's position was juripodised and this resulted into the loss of peace of mind. One of city fellow Haji Rajab, was so religious he usually visited to Hazrat

Abdul Azim's shrine on foot on Friday. When he was informed about driver's difficulty, he went to Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine on Thursday afternoon and prayed on his behalf. He stayed in the shrine on Thursday night and came back to Tehran on Friday afternoon and foretold that the receipt will be found on Saturday, but he has to see shop keeper who was responsible for it. It was revealed that the shop keeper saw in the dream, to make more serious effort to find the receipt. He did so and was ultimately successful in tracing out the receipt. Discovery of receipt brought a relief to the driver through the blessings of Hazrat Abdul Azim.¹⁶

3. Agha Meer was the Mutawalli of Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine at the end of Qajarieh reign. Asif-ul-Doula was the governor of Tehran, and claimed that he should be Mutawalli, but Agha Meer rejected him, and said that legal governor is related to Mutawalli. They conflicted with each other. Finally Asif-ul-Doula ordered his officers to arrest Agha Meer and send him to jail. Agha Meer participated in "burner lamp ritual" at Abdul Azim's shrine. He put the first burner lamp on its specific place, but discontinued putting lamp thereafter. He asked Hazrat Abdul Azim to help him by saying "I am a Syed, I will not serve you unless you accept my request" Khadims wanted officers to wait till tomorrow morning. Officers came back next day to arrest Agha Meer, but two messengers came from Tehran and said "do not disturb that gentleman".

Officers answered "it is Asif-ul-Doulah's order" messengers said "Asif-ul-Doulah died last night because of an ache in his abdomen".¹⁷

4. An old expensive chandelier was dedicated to Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine in 1976. It has been attracting people for many years. It was more than 60 million Rials (US \$ 6666) at that time. It was interesting that it had been dedicated by an Armenian Christian who had certain problems and was not able to solve it, so he was disappointed. On 21st Ramadan when he was going to Isfahan, he saw many people going to a specific direction towards the dome from a far distance, and said "I do not know the owner of this dome but he must be a generous person as many people are going towards him. I want the owner of this dome to fulfill my need, and I vow to bring a gift for him." The Christian came back to Tehran two days later and visited many chandelier shops and bought one of the most desirable chandeliers to dedicate it to the shrine. He told the story to one of the Khadims and wanted him to go on pilgrimage to Hazrat Abdul Azim on his behalf after kissing him.¹⁸
5. Late Allameh Bafghi was praying in a mosque behind Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine. There was an eulogy ritual in this mosque on one of the days of Moharram. A strange preacher who had come to Ray to elegize, wished for a pilgrimage to Hazrat Abdul Azim's shrine.

Since his cloak was torn, he was ashamed of preaching. He wanted Hazrat Abdul Azim to help him. When he reached the shrine, Allameh Bafghi was orating behind a tribune. He pointed the strange preacher to sit near the tribune, after the oration, Allameh Bafghi brought him to his house and gave him a cloak.

The preacher said "I did not want you to give me a cloak" and Allameh Bafghi replied "yes you wanted Hazrat Abdul Azim to give you a cloak".¹⁹

Notes and References

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12. Food eaten before morning prayers in the month of Ramadan.
13. Food eaten before evening prayers in the month of Ramadan.
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II. Shrine of Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh



Fig.1: Shrine of Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh

Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh

In Bahr-ul-Ansab, a famous book by Hasan Moharrer Khoei, Friday Imam, has been mentioned as Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh one of the children of Imam Moosa Kazim. No record of his date of birth and death is available.¹

Against the harsh behaviour Caliphs of Bani Abbas Caliphs with Alaviyan, Imam Zadeh Saleh found refuge in Iran. He was killed by one of the Bani Abbas officers, called Hasan Nami Behbahani. He pursued Imam Zadeh Saleh from Karaj bridge, and finally arrested him in Jannat Golshan garden, under a great plane tree, near Sari spring, and killed him with a shovel, Imam Zadeh Saleh was buried near the same spring by his disciple.² This shrine of Imam Zadeh Saleh is located in the North part of Tehran at Tajrish.

History of the Shrine

The grave of Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh was usual till century 7-8 A.H The first old and main building was built with courtyard, mosque, fence (Zarih) and dome with a measure of 3000m². It is one of the magnificent and glorious shrines of Iran.³

The main and primary building of the shrine is of a great and splendid square with thick walls. From the point of view of architecture it is similar to the buildings of Eilkhani reign with respect to the position of arches, and it was built in century 7-8 A.H. There is a silver and wooden fence in the middle and internal part of the shrine. This

wooden fence belongs to the reign of Nadir Shah Afshar, and the silver fence one to the endowments given by Mirza Saeed Khan, minister of the foreign affairs during the reign of Quajarieh. Clock of the shrine's fence belongs to Muayer-ul-Mamalek who endowed the clock by dedicating it to the shrine.⁴ The establishment of the current dome along with the subtle decorations and drawings and repairs of the shrine is attributed to Halakoo Mirza, famous as Bahadur Khan, son of Hasan Ali Mirza Shoja-ul-Saltaneh, the grand child of Fatah Ali Shah Quajar. This dome was built by Hasan Fadakar in the year of 1945. Expenses of repair and tile work of the shrine was met by him.⁵

Physical Description of the Shrine

The porches of the shrine: There are some porches around the shrine of Imam Zadeh Saleh, the floor has been covered with carpet and marble stone beautifully the walls are decorated with marble stones, mirrors, and patch work splendidly. The ceiling has been ornamented with spectacular mirrors and expensive chandeliers. These porches are meant for the entry and exit of the pilgrims to the shrine from three respective sides (Northern and Southern porches are specifically for females and western porch for males). These porches are also suitable places for reading holy books, performing single as well as collective prayers, resting and meditating. Various prayers like Komail, Nodbeh and Ashura are also performed in these porches. Religious ceremonies and mourning ceremonies are also held in these

porches such as birth anniversary of Prophet Mohammad, Islamic eves Eid-ul-Fitr, Eid-ul-Azha, Eid-ul-Qadeer Khum, and the birth anniversary of other Imams. Mourning in the month of Moharram and Safar for the commemoration of Imam Husain and his followers and narrating their details of suffering. It is also held in Ramadan (fasting month) during three nights of Qadar (the night of descending Quran). Some pilgrims also vow to wish an eulogist to elegize in these porches. The exact date of construction of these porches is not traceable, but according to the manuscript written above the entrance porch in the North part of the shrine on which a poem has been written about Fatah Ali Shah Quajar, it also bears the name of Halakoo Mirza hence the repair and decoration works of these porches is attributed to Quajarieh reign.

The courtyard of the shrine: A very large courtyard has surrounded the shrine of Imam Zadeh Saleh like a belt. This courtyard is a place for entry and exit, resting and distributing the charities to pilgrims. It has also various parts, each one has a specific relevance. The parts are:

Mosque: This mosque lies in one of the agricultural fields of Jafar Abad Darbandh. It was endowed by Shoja-ul-Saltaneh (during the reign of Quajarieh). This mosque is used for daily prayers. It is also used for various prayers like Nodbeh, Komail, Ashura. Mourning ceremonies for the commemoration of Imam Husain in the month of Moharram and Safar is held. Quran is recited during three nights of

Qadar in Ramadan. There are also certain Islamic ceremonies like birth anniversary of Prophet Mohammad (Eid-Milad-un-Nabi) and twelve Imams.

Hammam (Turkish bath): This Hammam is located near the mosque, and lies in one of the agricultural fields of Jafar Abad Darbandh. It was endowed by Shoja-ul-Saltaneh and was dedicated to Imam Zadeh Saleh. Pilgrims and people of the region take bath in it. It is also called as Saleh bath, and it is under the supervision of the office of Imam Zadeh Saleh.

Office for the dedications and vows: This office is in the north part of the shrine's courtyard. It receives pilgrim's dedications and vows, either in the form of cash or goods on a receipt. The receipts in the form of bank checks are available for 1000, 2000, 5000, 10000, 20000, 50000, 100000 Rials⁶, on which the amount is written, if the dedication or vow is in the form of goods, its will be written on a receipt given to the pilgrim. The money which is received from pilgrims is spent for the development of the shrine and distributed among the poor and needy through charity institution.

Qarzulhasaneh Islamic Bank: This bank controls economical affairs of the personnel and shrine's employees with a staff of five personnel. It gives them long-term, and interest free loans. The initial investment in the bank is done through the income of the shrine.

Bookshop: There is a big shop in the West part of the shrine's courtyard which sell different books of various fields of study. Such as religion, science, novels, others various publications, audio cassettes and CD's. The book shop is sponsored by the shrine, and its income is deposited to the account of shrine which is spent for the development of the shrine, poor, needy and charity institution (Fig. 2).

Taxi stand: Since pilgrims come to the shrine from far and near distances, hence taxi service is available for the comfort of the pilgrims. It is under the control of the shrine.

Meeting hall: There is a well equipped large meeting hall in the South part of the courtyard. Its has a capacity of accommodating 400 people at a time. Various religious ceremonies rituals and mournings and science congresses are organized by Khadims and Mutawallis of the shrine in this hall.

Charity institution: This institution provides financial assistance for purchasing house to poor, meets marriage expenses and medical expenses for those who are sick. At present this institution is awarding scholarship's to more than 200 poor and talented students who are studying in colleges and universities. If other mosques and shrines are in need of financial aid in order to help the poor and to hold various rituals and ceremonies, this institution provides financial help.

Training institute: This institute has been established to educate and train employees of the shrine in various fields of study such as Islamic

teaching, professional and occupational educations, and sociability with pilgrims. It also helps the local youths, employees and their children to spend their leisure time by getting engaged in calligraphy, handicrafts, reciting and commenting on the percepts of Quran.

In the summer of 2004, about 110 students were benefited in the different fields of study under the supervision of eight educators. The expenses were borne by the shrine.

Veil room: There are several veils in this room. Which is looked after by a manager who lends it to female pilgrims (those who do not possess) for entering the courtyard of the shrine.

Shops: There are six shops in the Eastern part of the shrine's courtyard, their entrance doors open to the mosque situated in the market of the shrine. Tenants of these shops deposit their monthly rent to the account of the shrine. The income is spent for the charity institutions (social services).

Rooms: There are two rooms in the Eastern part of the courtyard in which many religious, scientists and political personalities are buried.

Health centre: The building consists of two story. In 2001 it started with the staff of fifteen doctors, nurses and midwives and specialized doctors in different fields such as skin, dental, medicine, ophthalmology and pediatrics (Fig. 3).

This centre functions from 8 AM to 10 PM every day and offer medical treatments to the pilgrims and employees. Medical care and



Fig. 2: Bookshop



Fig. 3: Health centre

medicines are free for the poor. Fifty percent concession is given to outsiders as well as employees of the shrine.

The whole expenses of the establishment of the above centre is provided by the shrine. Income of this centre is deposited to the account of shrine. It is important for the officials to know that if there is shortage of money for the medical treatments if so, some money of Imam Zadeh Saleh's fence (Zarih) may be transferred to the centre.

Library: This library which is called Salehieh, was established in 2003. It has 27000 books belonging to different fields of study such as religion, philosophy, logic, literature, sociology, psychology, natural and medical sciences, arts, computer and agriculture. Various journals and publications are also present in the library (Fig. 4).

This library is a three story building. It consists of books, magazines, references, reading sections for women and men, separately. At present the library has enrolled 3100 members, and near about 170-200 members visit daily. Majority of them are university students. Librarian and staff members look after the affairs of the library from 8 AM to 5 PM daily.

Super market: It is called Saleh, it has been established for the comfort of the employees of the shrine but other people can also use it. All type of goods are available in the market. Comparatively the prices are 10-20 percent cheaper than of market's. Income of this market is deposited to the account of shrine.

Dryer shop: The main work of this shop is washing and ironing Khadim's clothes, screens and veils of the ladies. This shop provides its services in a suitable environment with modern equipments. Poor people wash their clothes free of cost. While washing clothes of general people are charged minimum. The income is deposited in the account of shrine.

Kitchen: The kitchen of Imam Zadeh Saleh is a place for cooking food for various ceremonies and mourning rituals, such as Moharram, Safar, Ramadan (fasting month), and on other days on the request of pilgrims for distribution among the poor (Fig. 5).

Graves: According to the list provided by Imam Zadeh Saleh's board of trustees, about 270 people are buried around the shrine's courtyard, most of them are related to the last of Quajarieh reign and beginning of the first Pahlavi reigns. The names of distinguished personalities buried are:

Princess Hajieh Saheb Khanom daughter of Abbas Mirza, who was regent of Fatah Ali Shah Quajar, Mirza Nasrullah Khan Naeeni, Moshir-ul-Doulah chancellor of constitutional government, Mirza Nasrullah Khan Naeeni's wife who was called Ghods-ul-Doulah, daughter of Haji Mirza Gholi Khan Ziba Khanom Ghods-ul-Doulah's mother, who was buried near her daughter, Moayed-ul-Soltan Mirza Abdul Husain Khan who was Ghods-ul-Doulah's brother and his son,



Fig. 4: Library



Fig. 5: Kitchen

Mirza Taqi Khan, Mirza Hasan Khan Moshir-ul-Doulah peer Nia son of Mirza Nasrullah Khan.

Endowments of the shrine: The measurement of the mausoleum and its courtyard is 3000 m² with the plague number 2640.

There is a mosque in the North part of the shrine with the measurement of 100 m². It is among the endowments of the shrine. Followings properties in Tajrish have been endowed to Imam Zadeh Saleh.

1. A coffee shop in the area of 25 m²
2. A bath with in the area of 350 m²
3. Twenty two shops with distinguished plague numbers (Fig. 6).
4. A garden in the area of 4000 m²
5. A garden in the area of 3000 m²
6. A garden in the area of 2500 m²
7. A field in the area of 4000 m²
8. A field in the area of 1700 m²
9. A piece of land in the area of 4000 m²
10. 1.5 shares of Doukian subterranean (for watering endowed gardens and fields).
11. 2.5 shares of Golab subterranean (for watering endowed gardens and fields).

12. Using Jafar Abad subterranean water 66 hours every week (for watering endowed gardens and fields).⁷

The incomes of these endowments is more than 400000000 Rials (US \$ 45000) for year. The whole income is deposited to the account of the shrine.

Officials and Important Functionaries Related to the Shrine

They are divided into two groups:

1. Directly 2. Indirectly

1. Directly: They rely on the shrine occupationally and financially and are considered as permanent employees of the shrine. They receive wages from the shrine every month.

2. Indirectly: These people are totally dependant on his resources by visiting pilgrims.

Those who rely on the shrine directly include:

Mutawallis: Imam Zadeh Saleh's shrine has one administrative manager who is selected by the board of trustees. He is a senior Mutawalli (administrative manager) of the shrine. He delegates his power on the other Mutawallis who are assigned a specific job. These Mutawallis control administrative, financial, cultural and technical functions. The work of these Mutawallis is checked by a senior Mutawalli. Their duties are as following:

- To regulate the actions and decisions of board of trustees.

- To look after the financial position, welfare, insurance and health of the shrine's employees.
- To check the income of the shrine and their expenditure.
- To control the administrative and technical position and constructions and the maintenance of the buildings, electricity, water, gas, as well as cleaning the surroundings of the shrine.
- To control various ceremonies, programmes and mourning rituals held in the shrine and outside the shrine for better arrangement.

Khadims: There are 32 male and female Khadims in the shrine who work separately. Some male Khadims work for male, and some female Khadims work for female. They stand in the porches and the surroundings of the shrine and maintain discipline, guide the pilgrims and rest. They also clean the surroundings and items related to the shrine.

There are also 25 honorary Khadims (men and women) in the shrine who work some hours or days in the shrine without receiving any money, because of their vow and belief in the saint and the miracles of the shrine.

Disciplinary officers: There are 21 disciplinary officers (men and women) in the shrine, they stand in the surroundings of the courtyard, entrance and exit gates of the shrine. They maintain discipline in the courtyard of the shrine by controlling the crowd of pilgrims, guide them and explain about the cleanliness of the shrine.

Shoe keepers: There are 14 shoe keepers (men and women) in the shrine who work in two parts, shoe keepings is located in front of exit and entrance doors which leads to the porches. They keep pilgrim's shoes and give them a receipt. No money is charged (Fig. 7).

Ferashes (servants): There are 10 ferashes in the shrine who work in two shifts. They clean and wash different belongings of the shrine such as carpets, rugs etc. They finally cover the porches and courtyards with carpets at the time of various rituals.

Those who rely on the shrine indirectly include:

Roza Khawns (preachers): They recite sad and happy eulogies for mourning and to enhance sad and happy mood of the ritual. They sit in the porches around the shrine. Financial office issues them a license to preach. These Roza Khawns receive some money from a pilgrim who has a vow.

Eulogists: They are usually famous and are invited by Mutawallis. They receive their fee at the end of the rituals.

Dua Navees (writer of prayer): A large number of Dua Navees sit in the markets around the shrine. Usually women approach them. These Dua Navees have many prayer books, and write various Duas (prayer) on the paper such as, disputes between espouses, property disputes, childless women, cure for diseases, marriage etc. A person who wishes for a Dua, keep it as an advise by Dua Navees. They pay some money to the Dua Navees.



Fig. 6: Endowment shops



Fig. 7: Shoe keepers

Markets: There are many big and small markets around the shrine for meeting pilgrims and other people's requirements. Imam Zadeh Saleh's market, is usually crowded and very famous. Its measurement is 2500 m². It was built during the reign of Quajarieh's kings for religious rituals. During the month of Moharram and Safar this market is closed due to mourning on the death anniversary of Imam Husain. Shops around the shrine sell pilgrim's requirements, such as: veil, prayer rug, candle, vowed items such as salt and wheat (for the doves of the shrine), cookies, dates, various types of jewelleries, clothes, food and head dresses (Rosary) etc. Pilgrims purchase these goods for themselves and for others. These shops also provide the necessary requirements of local people such as books, fruits, vegetables, bags, shoes, clothes and watches. Nice weather and pollution free region compels many high standard and well-off people to visit this place for purchasing different type of items (Fig. 8).

Vendors: There are many vendors in the markets and allies around the shrine, they sell different things as jewelleries, decorated items, salts, wheat, chocolates, cookies, candles, small prayer books, bags, shoes, and watches. Some of them have occupied a specific place in the market and others keep on changing their places. Since all shops around the shrine are crowded.

Beggars: There are many beggars in markets, streets, and allies around the shrine. Most of them are children and women, they recite some written poems to arouse pilgrim's emotions. Beggars in this area

earn good money than those in other places, because of the shrine and rich people visiting the market.

Some service welfare centres and organizations are established around the shrine like coffee shops, restaurants, banks, travel agencies, and post office. These centres are providing services for the comfort of people.

Administration of the Shrine

The administration of Imam Zadeh Saleh's shrine was given to Shemiranat charity institution on the approval of Islamic consultative assembly in 1984. The shrine's board of trustees consist of six religious leaders including local and governmental trustees, one of them is selected as administrative manager by board of trustees and introduced to the charity institution. Administrative manager is considered as senior Mutawalli (having long experience). He is responsible for managing the administration of the shrine with five assistants. They include: administrative assistant, financial assistant, official assistant, cultural assistant and technical assistant. Each one possessing different offices and performing specific duties. The whole income of the shrine (vows and properties, endowments, charities, money and Jewellery given by pilgrims which is placed in lock boxes) is deposited into the account of Imam Zadeh Saleh shrine which is under the control of Shemiranat charity institution.

All incomes is maintained by Shemiranat charity institution, The expenditure is controlled by the financial office of the shrine.

Rituals and Ceremonies of the Shrine

Many rituals held in the shrine are controlled by Mutawallis such as daily, weekly, monthly and yearly rituals.

Daily rituals: Khadims wear special clothes before Aazan on (calling to prayer) every day. Senior Khadim opens the main door before morning prayer and pays reverence to Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh. Khadims stand on their respective places where their duties are assigned. After cleaning the items and surroundings of the shrine, they settle discipline and guide the pilgrims. Daily prayers are performed collectively every day in which Khadims, pilgrims and local people participate (Fig. 9). There are also several pilgrims standing in the porches of the shrine every morning and evening. Eulogists recite some eulogies to those who have different type of sufferings, and pilgrims listen to them. At the end, eulogists receive their fee and pray for the pilgrims.

These eulogies usually talk about Imam Husain, twelve Imams, Hazrat Fatima and Hazrat Abbas. Reciting Quran is another ritual held in the porches around the shrine every day. Proficient readers of Quran are invited. They recite holy Quran and explain important events to pilgrims with their sweet voice. Pilgrims listen very sincerely and carefully. Some pilgrims weep bitterly, particularly women .At the



Fig. 8: Market



Fig. 9: Pilgrims offering prayer (Namaz)

end tea, dates and cookies are offered. Doors of the shrine are closed at 10 PM on Saturday, Sunday and Monday, and rest of the days Khadims close the doors at 11 PM, the senior Khadim locks the main door of the shrine.

Weekly rituals: One of the ritual ceremonial day only women participate to offer cloth. A big table is kept on Thursday from 9 AM to 11 AM. This big table is placed in the meeting room. Sweets, cookies, dates, fruits, dried fruits and tea are placed on it. These pilgrims eat and distribute charities among the poor and the pilgrims outside the meeting room and shrine. The expenses are borne by pilgrim's charity.

Another weekly rituals held at the shrine are:

Ashura prayer: It is another ritual recited in the morning every Monday at 7 AM. It is about the commemoration of Imam Husain his family and his followers and their sufferings in Karbela. One eminent theologian delivers speech and prays for the pilgrims, who are listening and weeping during speech.

Komail prayer: It is a ritual which is held on every Thursday afternoon and it is a prayer for providing people's needs. One eminent person recites and others listen.

Nodbeh prayer: It is another ritual recited on every Friday morning. It is about the commemoration of Prophet Mohammad and his family. One theologian recite it and others listen to him. Participants are received warmly. At the end tea, cookies, sweet and dates are offered.

Friday prayer: It is one of the prayer performed in the shrine in which pilgrims and people of the area participate. They perform Friday prayer after listening two orations of Friday Imam.

Al-e-Yaseen: It is also another ritual recited on Friday afternoon by an outstanding scholar of Quran. Pilgrims and others participate in this ritual, and at the end of the ritual they are offered tea, cookies, dates and sweets.

Monthly rituals: Cleaning or dusting ritual (*ghobar rubi*) of the shrine is performed at the last day of every solar month by the board of trustees. High-ranking personalities such as scientists, cultural people, government officers, managers, sportsmen, brilliant students of various universities are invited to this ritual. At first some verses and eulogies are recited, then nine persons are selected by the board of trustees, they wear white and rose-odorous dress, while praying, they enter the shrine's fence (Zarih), collect the money and Jewelleries inside the fence and wash the whole items and surroundings of the shrine's fence with rose water.

Pilgrims (especially women) sit in the porches around the shrine's fence. They face the shrine and request Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh humbly to fulfill their needs.

After completing the said ritual, the shrine's fence is closed, then the collected money is counted in the presence of the managers thereafter, it is given to the bank representative for depositing in the

account of the shrine. At the end tea, sweets and cookies are offered to pilgrims and guests.

Income accumulated during the first three months in the year of 2004 was 1866530000 Rials (US \$207,400) as reported by the financial affairs.

Recitation of Quran is another ritual held in the beginning of every lunar month. Several outstanding scholars of Quran are invited. They recite some verses of Quran on the auspicious beginning of the month.

Many pilgrims participate in this ritual people distribute their charities among the poor and pilgrims around the courtyard of the shrine.

Yearly rituals: Birth anniversary of Prophet Mohammad: A glorious ceremony is held in Imam Zadeh Saleh's shrine on this day. The whole shrine is decorated with green stuffs, coloured ribbons, lights, and flowers. Several eulogists are invited to this function to enhance the glory of the ritual with their happy eulogies. All pilgrims celebrate this auspicious day, congratulate each other and recite peace upon on Prophet Mohammad. Being a holy day, people prefer to distribute their charities among the poor and needy persons.

Many wedding ceremonies are also performed on this holy day. Several pilgrims who are financially sound, come to the charity institution of the shrine for helping the poor who are going to get

married. They also help some poor students who are studying in various universities they are benefited by the charity institution.

Death anniversary of Prophet Mohammad: The whole shrine especially its fence are covered with black stuffs during this day. The shrine's employees and pilgrims wear black dresses, recite Quran, prayer for Prophet Mohammad and participate in mourning rituals. Eulogist recite some eulogies and poems in the commemoration of Prophet Mohammad. At the end tea and dates are offered to the participants.

Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha: On the eves Eid-ul-Fitr (end of fasting month) and Eid-ul-Azha (feast of sacrifice) the whole surroundings of the shrine are decorated with flowers, lights and coloured stuffs. Many pilgrims visit to the shrine with new, clean, and scented clothes. Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha prayers are performed on these two eves in which many people participate. After the prayer they kiss and congratulate each other. Sweets, syrup, cookies are offered to the people.

Eid-ul-Qadeer Khum: The whole shrine is decorated on Eid-ul-Qadeer Khum, festive ceremonies are held in which a number of people participate. They are received warmly and offered sweets, cookies and syrup.

Birth anniversary of Hazrat Zainab: Festive rituals are held in the shrine on this day, eulogists recite some eulogies and poems in the

commemoration of Hazrat Zainab. Pilgrims and participants are received warmly and offered with sweets and cookies at the end of the ritual.

Months of Moharram and Safar: The whole shrine is covered with dark stuffs, mourning rituals are held during these months. Several eulogists are invited to the shrine every day to recite some eulogies and poems about the martyrdom and sufferings of Imam Husain, his family and his followers, to increase the sad mood of the ritual. Several mourning groups come to the shrine from different parts of the region to participate in the rituals especially of Ashura (tenth day of Moharram).

There are also several mourning rituals held on Arbaeen (40 days after the martyrdom of Imam Husain his family and his followers) in which many people participate. During all these days, food is cooked in the kitchen of the shrine for participants and the poor. The people whose requests are accepted with the blessings of Hazrat distribute their charities among the poor and pilgrims in the shrine.

Ramadan (fasting month): Recitation of Quran is done after every evening prayer in the shrine. One chapter (Sura) of Quran is recited on each day so that the whole of Quran is completed at the end of Ramadan. Everyday Sahri and Aftar is provided to the poor and pilgrims, during the month some food is also given to the poor families.

There are also other festive ceremonies for the birth anniversary of Hazrat Fatima and twelve Imams. Several eulogists recite eulogies and happy poems to enhance the happiness of the ritual. At the end participants in the shrine congratulate each other, tea, sweets, cookies and juices are offered. They distribute their vows and charities among the poor and needy pilgrims.

There are also some mourning rituals on the death anniversary of Imams. Several eulogists recite sad poems about the sufferings of Imams to increase the sad mood of the people. Participants console each other. They are offered tea and dates at the end of the ritual.

Rituals Performed by the Pilgrims at the Shrine

People of different ages (male and female) having different social status visit the shrine. It is very interesting that people belonging to middle and lower class visit in large numbers. People of various countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, India, visit the particular shrine (Fig. 10).

According to the manager of the shrine about 20000 pilgrims visit this place on Thursday, Friday, holidays and ceremonial days. While on other days the number is approximately 15000.

Pilgrims are usually conscious of their visit to the shrine. They wear clean clothes and respect the shrine with great humility. Ladies cover themselves with a veil to enter the shrine. If they do not have a

veil, they borrow it from the Khadims of the shrine and then return it after the pilgrimage.

After passing the shrine's courtyard, pilgrims go to the shoe rooms located in front of the entrance doors of the porches. They give their shoes to the shoe keeper and receive a receipt. After entering the porches they kiss the entrance doors and recite the prayer book of Imam Zadeh Saleh which is in fact permission for entering. They recite some Duas and turn around half part of the shrine's fence (Fig.11). Some pilgrims hold the shrine's fence firmly, pray humbly and want Imam Zadeh Saleh to complete their needs, while others pray in front of the shrine's fence for the health of their families and relatives. Some pilgrims pay their debts by dedicating money to the glass rack of the shrine's fence, their intentions is to give some financial aid to the shrine. Some pilgrims may attach a lock, thread or piece of cloth to the shrine's fence in order to develop their relation with the saint and another reason is that they may be suffering, they would open and untie these items if their needs are fulfilled by the blessing of Hazrat.

After completing the rituals of the shrine, pilgrims visit and rest in the porches and courtyard of the shrine (Fig. 12). Some pilgrims perform pilgrimage or vow prayer. If it is the time of daily prayer, they perform it collectively in the shrine. Some pilgrims recite Quranic Suras like Sura-e-Yaseen, Sura-e-Mulk, Aayat Al Kursi, Char Qul. Some pilgrims who have sufferings and difficulties approach to an eulogist



Fig. 10: Foreign pilgrims



Fig. 11: Pilgrims at the fence (Zarih)

and ask him to elegize. Eulogist prays for the solution of their problems. Eulogies are related to Hazrat Abbas, and twelve Imams.

Some pilgrims sit in the corner of the porches and meditate about their needs, sufferings, saint of the shrine, spiritual and ethical problems. Others select this place in order to rest some hours far from madding crowd or material problems. Some pilgrims also chose this place to worship God for some hours. After doing rituals, pilgrims leave the surroundings and porches of the shrine. Some families sit in a part of the shrine's courtyard for some hours to rest and eat their food or distribute food among people as a vow. These various charities and *nazar* include: breads, cheese, sweets, dates, dried fruits, pistachio nuts, roasted peas, raisins, hazel nuts, almonds, and dried berry, pottage, Kachi, chocolates and cookies etc. Many people come to eat these charities, because they believe that these vows and charities are holy, some eat them because they are needy (Fig. 13).

Salt is the most famous vow distributed among people in the shrine. We can observe salt sellers outside the shrine's courtyard and salt distributors inside the courtyard in large number. Pilgrims believe that salt is the dowry of Hazrat Fatima and causes the blessing of life.

Some people who have a vow, distribute veils, dresses, socks, handkerchiefs, prayer rugs etc. among pilgrims in the shrine's courtyard. Generally poor people use these charities.

Number of these charities on Wednesdays are distributed more in comparison to other days, because people believe that the day



Fig. 12: Pilgrims resting in courtyard



Fig. 13: A pilgrim distributing Nazar

belongs to Imam Moosa Kazim, Imam Zadeh Saleh's father, so their vows and needs will be accepted and fulfilled, and their difficulties will be solved sooner on this holy day.

According to the office manager of dedication and vows dedicated money is deposited to the bank account of the shrine, some items like jewelleries, veils, screens, carpets, lamps, chandeliers, candles, various clothes, rice and wheat are used for the shrine and the rest is given to the charity institution (social services) for the distribution among poor and needy. Managers give receipts after receiving the goods and money from pilgrims.

Pilgrims come to the shrine because of various reasons. The main reason is of receiving heavenly reward. They have also some sufferings, and want Imam Zadeh Saleh to complete their needs, because they feel him as an intermediate between themselves and God. Some of the pilgrims including women, men, old and young ones were interviewed:

An old woman said "I have come to this place for the sake of the pilgrimage and another reason is that my son has been suffering from backache, a surgical operation is advised by doctors. He has four children. I have come here to pray and want Imam Zadeh Saleh to cure my son without any operation. I have vowed some cookies and distributed them among people and requested them to pray for my son".

Esmat Hasan Abadi from Tehran told "I have come here for the sake of pilgrimage. I also want Imam Zadeh Saleh to help us to have our own house, because we have been living as a tenant for several years and facing difficulties. If people pay their debts to my husband, we will be able to purchase a house."

Fariba Nami from Ahwaz said that "I have come to this place for the sake of pilgrimage. I want Imam Zadeh Saleh to help me for admission in medical course, I have been struggling since last three years continuously. One of my friend told me to visit the shrine and pray".

Khorsheed Husain from Pakistan said "I have faith on the saint as well as on different shrines hence I keep on visiting time to time, I have export import business. Now a days my business is not earning profit. So I want Imam Zadeh Saleh to help me to flourish my business".

Jamal Ibrahimi from Isfahan who had come for the sake of pilgrimage, said "I fell in love with one of my classmate girl and decided to marry, her parents rejected my proposal, because I was studying and unemployed. I had to wait till the completion of my education. Both of us are now graduate and I am currently employed, even then the proposal was rejected for the sake of their daughters education. I have come here to fulfill my wish as I am too depressed and cannot live without her".

Ali Ahmadi from Tehran said “my wife and I are not having good relations since of our marriage. There has been some misunderstanding between us. We have different taste and way of life. Our relatives tried a lot to convince her for reunion but it was in vain. Therefore I have come here to solve my problem by praying”.

Praying for the dead who are buried in the shrine is another ritual performed by pilgrims. While entering the shrine, pilgrims pay reverence to Imam Zadeh Saleh during their visit. They also talk and behave to each other politely in order to increase the heavenly reward of the pilgrimage.

At the end of the rituals pilgrims try to respect the whole items of the shrine and keep them safely, since they believe that these items are holy. Finally they bow and leave the shrine humbly with great satisfaction.

Miracles Pertaining to the Shrine

It seems that Imam Zadeh Saleh has many miracles with respect to the pilgrim's belief and written sources. Pilgrims come to this place for the sake of the pilgrimage. They may also have some difficulties, and seek help from Imam Zadeh Saleh to complete their needs. It is a belief that people refer to the shrine only when there is no alternative and Imam Zadeh Saleh is the last hope for the solution of their problems, in fact he is an intermediate between them and God. The followings are some miracles of Imam Zadeh Saleh:

1. One of the pilgrims wrote in the registration book of miracles on March 14th in 2003. "My son who is Ph.D. in agriculture had been suffering from an incurable disease since five years. Various medical treatments were of no use. He was admitted in Tehran, Mehr hospital on 1st March and oxygen was given on March 9th when he was put at I.C.U. I went on pilgrimage to Imam Zadeh Saleh, there I prayed for two hours for curing my son, then I returned to the hospital, and prayed the whole night, next morning doctors told that your son cured miraculously. Now my son is completely healthy and we have come here to thank Imam Zadeh Saleh".
2. A pilgrim wrote on January 27th 2003. "My wife and I were traveling to Semnan two days ago, our car crashed on the road and my wife was thrown out of the car. Her brain, abdomen, and eyes were injured severely, I took her to Tehran Day hospital, doctors said that surgical operation is not possible and there are no chances of survival, but we are taking a risk. At the last hours of that night, I went to Imam Zadeh Saleh's shrine and prayed and vowed of slaughtering eight lambs and 1000 Kilos of rice. After returning from shrine doctors told me that surgical operation had been done successfully and my wife is out of danger. Now she is all right, so I have come here to pay my debt and thanks to Imam Zadeh Saleh".
3. An eighteen year-old girl who was born blind once dreamed that she had gone on pilgrimage to Imam Zadeh Saleh for curing her

eyes. Later she went to the Imam Zadeh Saleh's shrine with her family, aunt and uncle on Friday night. She prayed there and dreamed that Imam Zadeh Saleh has cured her eyes. Suddenly she woke and found her eyes healthy. She told the story to her family and pilgrims in the shrine, she and her family lost their consciousness. Khadims helped them, and after sometime they saw that a blind girl had cured miraculously. After many years Khadims can still trace the presence of the family in the shrine every Friday night.

4. A woman from Afghanistan who has been living in Iran since the last 15 years and has been visiting Imam Zadeh Saleh's shrine for many years. She told "we had a long-term dispute of property. It was very difficult to solve and every one failed. So I visited Imam Zadeh Saleh to solve my problem and attached one lock of the shrine fence and several on the back, suddenly the lock was opened, my daughter and one of the pilgrims near me understood this situation. All of us cried "it is a miracle." One of the Khadims called me Hazrat Zahra's servant and wanted to distribute some cookies among the pilgrims and also wanted an eulogist to elegize according to the advise of that Khadim, I wanted an eulogist to elegize. I followed her advice. When I returned home, I found that my problem was solved. Now we have been living happily so we have come to this place to thank Hazrat".

5. One person mentions in the registration book of Imam Zadeh Saleh "one day I was coming back to Tehran after visiting a city, several thieves stole my money as much as 50000000 Rials (US \$ 5500). There I vowed to find my money in 24 hours and dedicate 5000000 (US \$ 550) Rials to Imam Zadeh Saleh's shrine. Fortunately thieves were arrested in less than 24 hours, and now I have come here to pay my debt".
6. A 29 year-old woman had written in the registration book of miracles "I had diabetic problem, after a while it affected my eyes. According to some doctors, my disease was acute which would gradually attack on nervous system and paralyze the whole body. One day I visited Imam Zadeh Saleh's shrine, and requested him to cure me. When I left, the aroma of jasmine had filled my clothes. After medical examinations, doctors wondered that I was miraculously cured".
7. One of the woman Khadim Mrs Nasiri who had been working in the shrine for many years, said "when I was young, I fell sick and was confined to bed in a hospital, there I dreamed several people wearing mask, they told me to put on my shoes and go on pilgrimage to the shrine of Imam Zadeh Saleh. Suddenly I woke and vowed to work all of my life at the shrine if I would be miraculously cured. Eventually I was cured in the hospital and I went to Imam Zadeh Saleh's shrine to complete my vow. Officials of the shrine did not allowed me to work, because I was too young.

Again I dreamed Imam Zadeh Saleh who wanted me to work in the shrine in spite of the refusal. Hence, I am working since 20 years in the shrine after being permitted by the officials”.

Another miracle of the shrine is attributed to on 18 years old girl who was dumb and motionless, she had come to the shrine with her mother to pray and when reached to his native place, she was completely healthy and normal.

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Chapter IV

*Shrines of India and
Iran: Comparison*

In this chapter an attempt has been made to trace the similarities and dissimilarities between the shrines of India and Iran. According to the subject of study various aspects discernable for the study has been brought up in this chapter. The chapter highlights main points of the similarities and dissimilarities, whereas the full length description of the shrines of India and Iran have already been undertaken in the previous chapters.

Similarities

Tracing the genealogy of all the four saints under the study, it was found that, it is connected to Hazrat Ali. All these saints had a common purpose of propagating Islam based on Quran, Hadith, tradition, life style, deeds and sayings of Prophet Mohammad.

These saints lived a virtuous life, they were the source of benediction and worldly benefits to the mankind. Hence in order to glorify these saints, their disciples or followers built shrines and established a custom of pilgrimage to it. These shrines attract a large number of people. In the course of history and passage of time certain advancement and alternation took place in the structure of shrines, however, every change was beheaded towards betterment and beautification. The expansion gave opportunities and enough space, for performing customs and holding ceremonies in the yards, boundaries and corridors of the shrines. Friday prayers and normal prayers are performed in congregation in the mosque of the shrine.

Daily, weekly, monthly and yearly rituals are held at the above mentioned places of the shrine. These portions are also used by pilgrims as a place for rest and passing time. Generally the shrines witness a prolific interaction among the pilgrims they discuss their social, religious, cultural and personal problems, while exchanging views. The campus or premises has important personalities and their disciples buried. Pilgrims visit their shrine and recite benediction prayer (Fatiha).

The yards, boundaries and corridors of the shrine have exit and entrance gates, which is kissed by the pilgrims while entering and leaving the shrine. Pilgrims also touch the gates with hands and then rub it on their face and head.

The shrine has a reserved place for cooking and distributing food amongst the poor and pilgrims, the kitchen or *langar khana* has cooked food which is distributed among the pilgrims and needy who have come from different parts of the country. Pilgrims accept the food as a gift or *tabarruk* and the needy individuals accept it out of their need. The food prepared in *langar khana* is held as pious and sacred, to which people accept with great enthusiasm and belief that they will get blessings out of it.

The shrines under the study has different places of residence for the accommodation of employees and Mutawallis. Officers for

receiving offers (*nazar*) from the pilgrims are always present in the shrine.

Governmental authorities and the pilgrims expressed their love and veneration towards the saint by donating properties, markets, shops, agricultural lands, orchards and centres for production. Good income is generated and earned from the said properties and from it new properties are bought and production centres are established. The final income generated from all resources goes directly to the shrines, where it is used for the development, repair work and for holding various ceremonies at the shrine.

Income generated from the various sources of the shrines are accumulated in the office and thereafter needy, weak and poor students are benefited from the money. In the shrines there are two types of service classes, one is direct, comprising service men (*Khadims*), and administrators and the other is indirect which includes *Dua Navees* (writer of prayer), shop keepers, vendors, beggars, restaurant owners and service centre owners. These two classes of workers render their services to the shrine.

Official matters of the shrines are dealt by a well defined hierarchical administrative system, different aspects of the shrine such as repair works, security, and accounts are controlled by the office of the shrines. The administrators also control organizational and cultural coordination between shrines and institution lying outside of the shrine.

These administrators are the core and main authority to control all these affairs of the shrine.

Both the shrines of Iran and Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti in India possesses a government representative who checks and controls the entire functioning of the shrine.

Everyday the main gate of the shrine is opened by Khadims. Firstly they offer *salam* and thereafter they do pilgrimage and recite Fatiha. Proper cleaning of the grave is done by Khadims who thereafter settle down in their respective places for performing their duties.

At the shrines of India and Iran everyday congregation prayer takes place. Employees and pilgrims of the shrine comprises the gathering. The shrine is closed at night and all pilgrims leave the premises.

Recitation of Quran and Fatiha is done on every Thursday in the evening. Quran is recited loudly and pilgrims seriously listen to the recitation. Friday prayer is held at the shrine comprising all employees, local people and pilgrims.

In the shrines of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya at New Delhi and of Iran, monthly recitation of Quran is followed by Fatiha, paying homage to Prophet Mohammad, Hazrat Ali and the saints buried in the shrines. It is attended by the employees and pilgrims.

Annual function or *Urs* is held on the birth and death anniversary of Prophet Mohammad, Hazrat Ali and saints respectively. The ceremony is attended by a large numbers of pilgrims belonging to various parts of the country and world. Religious speeches are also delivered on different occasions. Pilgrims listen it attentively.

Special functions are organized on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha in the shrines of India and Iran respectively. The occasion witness a large gathering of pilgrims and local people who visit the shrine to perform ceremonies as well as to attend the occasion. Eid-ul-Qadeer Khum is also celebrated in the shrine of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti in India and shrines of Iran.

Mourning in the month of Moharram is observed in the shrines of India and Iran respectively. During first ten days of the month lunch and dinner is offered to the people participating in mourning functions.

In the month of Ramadan recitation of Quran is followed by *Dua Khawani* (prayer). *Aftar* and *Sahri* is given to those who observe fast. Pilgrims and needy persons converge in large numbers for having *Aftar* and *Sahri*. Ceremonies on the occasion of *Shab-e-Qadar* is observed with full zest at the shrine. Similarly the function of *Shab-e-Barat* is held with great enthusiasm. People pray throughout the night.

The pilgrims visiting the shrine belong to various places of the country but the majority are from the middle and lower middle class.

On Thursday and Friday, the number of pilgrims and visitors is large comparatively to the other days of the week.

Pilgrims are conscious and careful about their hygiene, they wear clean clothes when they visit the shrine. While entering the shrine pilgrims touch and kiss the entry gate and rub their hands on their face and head. Thereafter they offer *Fatiha* and recite *Quran*. When they reach the main gate leading to the grave they repeat the same practice. They also perform *tawaf* of the shrine. After coming out of the tomb the pilgrims perform the following: they offer prayer in congregation at the appointed time. They tie thread or piece of cloth at different places of the shrine, mainly at the entry gate.

Thereafter pilgrims perform rituals and attend ceremonies, the needy offer *nazar* to meet their wishes and desires. Pilgrims who have come to shrine for paying tribute and homage to saint without any need or problem, take *nazar* as gifts and blessings. Pilgrims hold a belief that visiting shrines could bring them nearer to God through saint and would yield favour (*sawab*). By visiting these shrines pilgrims also get good opportunity to visit other graves in the vicinity of the main shrine. Other reason for their visit to the shrines are: fulfillment of their needs, eradication of the hurdles, attaining success in life, recovery from illness, solving family disputes, proper matrimonial, child birth and material prosperity.

While performing pilgrimage the pilgrims avail the opportunity of eradicating their hurdles of life and receive solution of their problems, moreover, they pass their free time and concentrate on spiritual and moral issues.

Pilgrims are conscious of paying reverence to the articles, items related to the shrine and situated in the vicinity of the shrine. They are also alert and conscious of the rights of others pilgrims and strictly avoid such things which are forbidden in the premises.

After pilgrimage the pilgrims pay visit to the market for purchasing gifts for themselves, friends and relatives. While coming out from the shrine they bow their head and do not show their back to the grave.

The pilgrims visiting shrine possess a deep rooted belief that the saints buried in the grave of the shrine have miraculous capabilities of virtue and they can make all impossible to possible, this belief is one of the major reason of attracting large number of pilgrims towards the shrine.

Differences

The saints buried in Indian shrines have spiritual tree (Tariqat) but that of Iran they do not have spiritual tree. Most of the saints in Iran have arrived under political refuge against the tyranny of the rulers of the time. This migration took place in most cases after Imam Reza. Purpose of these saints was solely holistic and headed towards

preaching of Islam. Likewise migration of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti from Iran to Ajmer was purely religious and political. Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya in Delhi was purely Indian, born and brought up in India.

In the shrines of India, the main grave has small door steps through which pilgrims can reach and can touch it by their hands. Contrary to it in Iran the grave is fenced. People touch the fence after they kiss their hands, instead of reaching directly to grave and offer their devotion. The fence has two parts one is meant for men and other for women. In the shrines of India there is a custom of offering *chadar* (cloth sheet) on the grave but in the shrines of Iran the custom is not followed.

In India the shrine of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti has two cauldrons in which foods for the pilgrims are cooked. It is a unique equipment and no other shrine of India or Iran possess such cauldrons. It is only shrine in which twenty five cannon guns salute is given to announce the annual *Urs* in which around four lakh (400000) pilgrims come to participate. The shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya has a water reservoir or well, from it the pilgrims attain remedy (*shifa*) and recover from illness.

All shrines have endowments and properties attached to them in large numbers, yielding them good income. The case with the shrine of Hazrat Abdul Azim is different, the shrine has numerous endowments

and facilities such as clinic, museum, various schools and economical activities can be observed at the shrine as compare to other shrines, income is large. It is strategically multiplied by the persons who look after the shrine. Different classes of people also get benefited from the enrichment of the shrines.

The numbers of pilgrims visiting the shrines of India is comparatively large to that of Iran.

Shrines of Iran have study centres and a library attach to it. The shrine also renders services to the people in the field of academics by providing them books pertaining to different branches of study. Similarly the shrines of Iran have medical centres for the remedial cure of ill and ailing pilgrims, family members of the official of the shrine as well as for general people, the shrine also has a Islamic bank known as Qarzulhasaneh Islamic bank. It renders useful services to the employees and other people related to the shrine. It gives interest free loan.

Shrine of Hazrat Abdul Azim in Iran has an astrological study centre where astrology is taught.

Female pilgrims who do not possess veil are provided the same from the official of the shrine for which a special chamber exists. There is also a charity (*khairiya*) institution which extends financial help to the people in meeting their social needs such as, financial help for marriage expenses, medical expenses, purchasing houses.

Cooperative shops under the control of shrine provide essential household commodities to the employees at lower price. Similarly a laundry exist to provide free services to the employees and charge minimum from the outsiders. Taxi service is also available at cheap rates.

In the shrines of India the pivotal position is held by Sajjada Nashin who are the descendants of saints. These Sajjada Nashins are regarded as spiritual leader they squat most of the time on meeting pilgrims and attending their problems by receiving *nazar* from them. Pilgrims are more keen to have a company of Sajjada Nishin for performing rituals and ceremonies at the shrine, they regard them as a link between them and saint and finally to God. Pilgrims adopt this link under the impression that their needs will be met and their problems will be solved yielding them favour. Some of the male pilgrims touch the feet and kiss the hands of Sajjada Nashin and offer *nazar* in cash as a token of devotion and affection. The cash received by pilgrims is spent by Sajjada Nashin on the managing and controlling the administration of the shrine. Number of Sajjada Nashins in the shrines of India is considerably large in comparison to that of Iran. It is very difficult for a pilgrim to visit shrine without the help of Khadim otherwise they will behave indecently.

Shrines of Iran are taken care by the Mutawallis, these Mutawalli are not related to the saints, they render the services of repairing and

expanding the shrine. Women Khadims are only available in shrines of Iran.

In the shrines of India *qawwali* session is an essential part of the ceremonies. *Qawwals* gather at the entry gate of the shrine and sing *qawwalis* in praise of the saint. Whereas in the shrines of Iran the preachers recite verses of praise for Imam Husain and other Imams without musical instruments in the ceremonies.

In the shrines of India the pilgrims take off their shoes before entering the shrine, on the specified place. The shoes are looked after by shoe keepers who receive money in return. But in the shrines of Iran the place for taking off the shoes is at the entry gate of the tomb and the shoes are looked after without paying money.

In the shrines of Iran Roza Khwans (preachers) are present in large numbers, they recite elegy (*marsiya*) on the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Husain his family and his followers. These Roza Khwans also recite elegies on the demand and request of the pilgrims particularly for the needy pilgrims in return of money in cash.

In the shrine of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti Fatiha Khwans are found who at the request of the pilgrims perform Fatiha but do not take money in return.

Dua Navees (writer of prayer) are also found inside the shrine of India but in Iran these Dua Navees are not present in the shrine rather they are found in the vicinity. The shrine of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti

has an administrative system comprising two branches one pertains to trusteeship, it looks after the repair work and financial matters, the other branch is of Syed Zadgans who manage to invite the rich people for charity works, they also control the income through *nazar* and other sources. All the matters pertaining to customs and ceremonies are administered by these groups.

In the shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya the administration is controlled by Sajjada Nashin since their number is large so they take up administrative work periodically. The turn of one Sajjada Nashin comes after a week. This periodical change results into a new mode of administration every week.

Contrary to it the shrines of Iran has administration controlled by a single unit. A trustee council exist in the shrine of Iran. The members of this council are known as Mutawallis, these Mutawallis discharge the administrative responsibilities and have over all control of the shrines.

In the shrine of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti three ceremonial functions are performed everyday, these functions include washing of the grave and changing the cloth of the grave twice a day by Khadims. Lightening ceremony (*roshni*) or Illumination is done before the evening (*Maghrib*) prayer by the Khadims and pilgrims. *Karka* function is held in which *qawwals* recite in *Bhojpuri* songs in praise of Khwaja

Moinuddin Chisti. This function is performed before the closing of the main door of the shrine. Pilgrims participate in large number.

In the shrines of Iran *roza khwani* is organized everyday. It is mainly focused on the description about Hazrat Imam Husain, his companion as well as of other Imams. Needy pilgrims attend it for their solution of problems they pay money in return to Roza Khwans.

In the shrine of Hazrat Abdul Azim the *roshni* function (*marasim-e-chirag*) is held. Khadims interchange their duty with other Khadims. Every week in the shrines of Iran the ceremonies of the Ashura prayer, Komail prayer and Nodbeh prayer are recited and the function is attended by pilgrims in large number.

In the shrines of India every month *visal* ceremony is organized on the death anniversary of saints, according to the lunar calendar. *Fatiha khwani* is also performed on this day. In the shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia every month ceremony of *Fatiha khwani* is held to bless Baba Farid Ganj Shakar and Hazrat Ghous Pak.

In the shrines of Iran every month dusting ceremony (*ghobar rubi*) is held. The function aims at collecting *nazar* or gifts present in the fence and dusting of items belonging to the fence.

Every year in the shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya, *Urs* of Amir Khusro is held on the day of his death. On this occasion recitation of Quran, Fatiha and poetic party (*mushaira*) is organized.

In the shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya the ceremony of Eid-ul-Qadeer Khum is not performed. In the shrines of Iran special function is organized on the birth and death anniversary of Hazrat Fatima. Similarly on the death and birth anniversary of twelve Imams, functions of merry making and mourning are held respectively. These ceremonies are attended by the pilgrims.

In the shrines of India pilgrims are suppose to take off their shoes at the entry gate and cover their heads when they enter the premises of the shrine, but it is not compulsory for the males to cover their heads in the shrines of Iran and they only put off their shoes when they wish to enter the main fence. In the shrines of Iran it is compulsory for the females to be in veil but in the shrines of Indian veil is not necessary.

In the shrines of Iran and of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti in India, male and female both visit the main grave but in the shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya entry of women through the main gate is prohibited only they can have glimpse from outward.

Similarly in the shrines of India flower leaves, sugar plums and sweets are offered to the grave as *nazar*. In the shrines of Iran pilgrims offer two *rakat namaz* for the purpose of pilgrimage, *nazar* and salvation. In the shrines of India visitors participate in the *qawwali* party and give money to them but in the shrines of Iran there are sessions of *roza khwani*.

The saints under study in India have performed miracles in their life time pilgrims after attaining to their needs through the medium of saints do not consider this attainment as a result of miracles as saints are no more alive.

Saints of Iran have not performed any miracles in their life time. But when the needy attend through the medium of these saints they regard this attainment as a result of miracle. However, people in general in Iran believe that what ever they achieve through the medium of saints is nothing but a result of the miraculous power of the saints.

Chapter V

Conclusion

An attempt has been made to throw light and analyse the sociological dimensions of the religious shrines of India and Iran respectively. Since religion is a social phenomenon, both religion and society are interconnected and dependable on each other and both are necessary for a prolific synthesis of faith. The study focuses mainly on the social contributions of the shrines of India and Iran with respect to their rituals and ceremonies contributing religiosity and widening the horizons of social interaction.

The study covers religious, psychological, social, cultural and economical aspects of the shrine. It also focuses on the primary purpose and need of pilgrims visiting the shrines, since human being tend to attain salvation and expiation from sins by praying and following a religion attributed to God. 'Salvation however may be linked with belief it has some attribution of truth to a certain metaphysical data',¹ development of dogmas and acceptance of faith.

Shrines act as not only a religious place but of social and cultural as well. It is undoubtedly a place for offerings and performing rituals and act as centre for social, cultural and religious synthesis. It is also a shelter for the homeless and sufferers.

As far as religion is concerned it is a collective phenomenon based on unified beliefs and practices related to sacred things. Social life is inherently religious and religious ceremonials are basically celebrations of social life. Harry Alpert a scholar of Emile Durkheim

classifies four major functions of religion viz. disciplinary, cohesive, vitalizing and euphoric social forces. Religion has also a euphoric function in that it serves to counteract feelings of frustration and loss of faith establishing the bellicose sense of well being. 'It is the product of effervescence induced by ceremonial activity'.² Religious rituals prepare men for social life by imposing self discipline and certain measure of asceticism. In the similar vein religious ceremonies bring people together and thus serve to reaffirm their common bonds and to reinforce social solidarity. 'Religion has in it two elements, social custom and collective conscience'.³ The first religious representation is of collective consciousness which is widened through the rituals and ceremonies performed by a pilgrim at shrines. Comprehensively, religious observance maintains and revitalizes the social heritage of the group and helps transmit its enduring values to future generations. Emile Durkheim opines that 'there is something eternal in religion it is the cult and the faith, men can not celebrate ceremonies for which they see no reason, nor can they accept a faith which they in no way understand'.⁴

Shrines and its pilgrimage enhance the faith and belief of an individual in a religion. These centres act as catalyst in forming and establishing a bond or relationship with the saint (though in oblivion) and finally with God. The association has pious and important relevance. Pilgrims seek solution of their problems through saint and desire to bring favourable conditions for themselves and their families.

Due to the fact that religion is every where an expression of a sense of dependence on a spiritual or moral power. Hence the shrines offers spiritual favour to an individual.

There can be no society which does not feel the need of upholding and reaffirming at regular intervals the collective sentiments and the collective ideas which make its unity and its personality and this can be achieved by the means of reunion, assemblies and meetings where the individuals being closely united to one another reaffirm their common sentiments. Hence pilgrimage is an act of paying homage and tribute to the saint as well as a social act of maintaining and forming a relationship with others. It also gives an ample opportunity for the pilgrims to interact socially with other people establishing a relationship, thus expanding the horizons of social interactions.

A pilgrim has preconceived notions and has no doubts on visiting the shrine and holds firm belief on the saint. Moreover, the pilgrims indulge in religious acts and ceremonies which is commonly practised by an individual such as, saying prayers, (Dua) reciting Quran and offerings (*nazar*). Since the religion belonging to the realm of the Orient 'emphasizes the necessity to live up to traditional – mystical social standards of conduct, rather than promulgating new standards'.⁵

All four shrines under study executes religious acts in their shrines. *Namaz* (prayer) is held in congregation, *Dua* is performed usually by the *Dua Navees* (writer of prayer) or any other official of the shrines, *Quran* is read, *nazar* is offered in form of cash money, gifts and sweets. These religious act are Islamic and are practiced by the Muslims in their daily life hence they do not hesitate while re-practicing it at the shrine. Moreover, collective religious consciousness at the shrine inculcate religious fervour in them, since religious ideas are produced by a synthesis of individual minds in collective action. These religious centres are meant for practising and performing religious rites and rituals collectively. The purpose behind all these religious activities at the shrine is to pay tribute and homage to the saint and to achieve a good rapport with God through the medium of saint.

It is worthy to note that some rituals performed by the pilgrims at the shrines are related to pre-Islamic culture and traditions of India and Iran respectively. When Aryans came to Iran and India, they possessed culture and tradition of their own. Reflection of their culture and tradition can be traced in Zorastriasm and Islam in Iran and Hinduism and Islam in India. Through illumination and fragrance Aryans use to invoke gods. Hence lighting ceremony or the illumination at the shrines is essentially a ritual of Aryans which was religiously practised in Iran and India and thereafter became an essential ritual of the shrines.

The present study investigates the historical perspective of the shrines of India and Iran and concludes that all four shrines and their respective saints found refuge in safer place, they were the victim of bigot rulers and usurpers. Preaching the gospel, and sayings of Prophet Mohammad, these four saints devoted their entire life in meditation, prayers and propagation of Islam. Historical evidence betrays that among all four saints, Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti was chosen and sent to India for the purpose of propagating Islam. Born in Sistan (Iran) Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti came to Ajmer via Baghdad, Lahore and Delhi at the age of 52 years around 1190. At that time the religious, cultural and social milieu of India was different. Ajmer was ruled by a Rajput King Prithvi Raj Chauhan. Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti took up the challenge of converting things according his ideologies and religious learning. It was the magnimity and grace of the saint that he became popular in very less time devoting himself in giving divine teaching to his disciples. People of Ajmer became his followers and embraced Islam. This how he succeed in his purpose of propagating Islam and thereafter devoted his entire life for the spiritual healing of his disciples. After his death at the age of 97 he was buried in the place where he lived and gave teachings. In order to glorify and preserve the memory of the spiritual mentor his followers and disciples started visiting his grave expressing deep sense of affection and love towards him, gradually the grave was turned into tomb and finally in

the shrine where large number of followers and believers visit and pay homage to the saint.

The present study focuses on the life history of the saints of India and Iran investigating course of happenings and circumstances (after the death of saint) which lead to the establishment of concrete structure of the shrines. Be it a shrine of India or Iran, the establishment of pilgrimage and the construction of shrine was executed by the disciples and followers of the saints. A close study of all four shrines under study reveals that saint lived a virtuous and religious life making them exemplaries of sincerity, faith and devotion towards God.

Another saint worth mentioning is Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya a great Sufi saint of the fourteenth century India. He was born in Badaun in the East of Delhi a famous centre of Islam prior to the conquest of Delhi by the Turks. He received religious teachings from his childhood which in calculated religious fervour in him. Among all four saints Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya is the only one who was born in a country and remained there for rest of his life, though tracing the geneology of his grand father Syed Ali, it is revealed that he migrated from Bukhara to Badaun. Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya was a devoted disciple and follower of Baba Farid, who gave him religious teachings. The generosity and sympathy of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya for common people is evidenced through an event before his death in which he ordered to give all his belonging and food stored in his house, among

the poors, he also ordered to open *langar khana* for distributing free food among Muslim and Hindus. During his life time a Khanqah was built by his disciples, expressing devotion and love for him which later became permanent place for Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya in his last phase of life and even after his death, he was buried there, the Khanqah was later turned into shrine, near Humayun's Tomb at East South of Delhi.

Shrines of Iran under study became religious centres functionally after the Islamic revolution in 1979. The shrines are visited by large numbers of pilgrims as compare to that of India because of the reason that majority of people in Iran are Muslims. Pilgrims at the shrines of Iran contribute a good income through gifts and endowments hence the fund of shrines at Iran is large as compare to that of India. Since the pilgrims visit the shrine of Iran in great numbers, several officials are available at the shrine.

The genealogy of Hazrat Abdul Azim Hasani and of Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh connects with Hazrat Ali. They both found refuge in Iran, a safer place. They both were the subject of tyranny and animosity done by the Abbasid Caliphs. Both saints lived a virtuous and pious life preaching and propogating Islam in their region.

Historical evidence betrays that Hazrat Abdul Azim Hasani migrated from Madina to Ray (Iran), following the order of Imam Hadi who has sent him to control all legal and religious affairs, as well as for

propagating Islam. It was due to his popular preaching that several people converted and accepted Islam in Ray. After his death he was buried in an apple garden and later his disciples turned the grave into primarily a dome and finally to the shrine.

Another saint under study is Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh son of Imam Moosa Kazim, like all other Imams and saints he also lived his life full of virtue and good deeds, he established himself as an exemplary saint. After his death, his grave was fenced and a primary sepulcher was built. Later it was expanded and decorated by his followers Halakoo Mirza, later the dome was built by one of the disciple Hasan Fadakar in 1945 and decorated it with tiles.

Hence the historical perspective of all four shrines reflects generalization of faith, spiritual belief and guidance. All four saints lived a pious and sincere life praying and meditating, they did not missed a single opportunity of benefiting their people. They propagated Islam and converged several people to Muslim their disciple expressed utter devotion and love towards them by turning their graves into shrine. Some of them even supported the extension and construction of the shrine and established a custom of pilgrimage at the shrine.

All four saints were responsible for widening the horizon of society, religion and culture. Their existence turned to be a boon for the particular social, cultural and religious setup. Their presence

moulded and changed the whole scenario of the society, culture and religion.

It is also worthy to note that all four saints were blessed with staunch and devoted followers, these followers during the life span of the saints served them with utter devotion and sincerity, stood next to the saints helping them to fulfill the mission of delivering human beings from predicament and worldly problems. Khwaja Ziauddin Wakil the Ameer of the city personally expressed his intention out of devotion to build a Khanqah for Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. Similarly Gayasuddin Balban of Ghulam dynasty financially supported for constructing tomb over the grave of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti. Halakoo Mirza was a staunch desciple of Hazrat Imam Zadeh Saleh, he decorated and repaired the shrine of the saint.

The study of all four shrines reveals that there are different class and number of pilgrims visiting the shrine. They belong to various religion, caste and creed. In case of the shrines of India not only Muslims but Hindus, Sikhs and Christians visit the shrine. Pilgrims visit the shrine according to their convenience some are regular visitors, others are occasional (especially in the days of *Urs*), some visit the shrine without any need or problem, expressing their love and veneration towards the saints. However, some exclusively visit the shrine in their adversities, usually when they have family disputes, illness or any other predicaments.

Rituals and ceremonies held at the shrine gives an opportunity to the believers to relax and shrug off their anxiety. pilgrims who visit the shrine in need, receive solace and peace of mind while attending the ceremonies and rituals. For them pilgrimage is a religious and time passing affair. Pilgrims relax and spent their time in meditating and praying with a belief of getting their problems solved with the intercession of saint. Hence the psychological function of shrine offers an influential capacity which regards shrines as the final resort for the oppressed belonging to all religions and cultures.

All fours shrines under study provide employment to several people associated directly or indirectly to the shrine such as Sajjada Nashins, Mutawallies, Khadims, Dua Navees, Fatiha Khwans, shop-keepers, beggars, vendors, permanent, non permanent associate's and officials of the shrines. Hotel owners, restaurant owners, shop keepers earn good money from the pilgrims by accommodating them and selling items related to the rituals and ceremonies of the shrine.

A part from the religious and psychological concern of the shrine its cultural aspect is also important. Shrines are not only religious and social centers, they also play an important role in forming the culture of nations. As culture is an essential part of formation of religious and social belief and vice versa. Shrine is a common place for all cultures, religions and society. Usually a comprehensive relationship and bond among pilgrims is formed at the shrine. Pilgrims belonging to different

cultures interact and exchange views. Moreover, pilgrimage gives them strength and courage to face the stern adversities of life.

The present study also reveals that shrines of India and Iran have affluent endowments and properties attached to them. Shrines of Iran have study centres, library and medical centre rendering useful service to the employers and people related to the shrine. There is a charity institution extending financial help to the people in meeting social needs such as, finance for marriage, medical treatment of illness, purchasing house. Moreover, cooperative shops under the control of shrine provide essential household commodities to the employees and pilgrims at lower price. Society of Syed Zadgan at the shrine of Moinuddin Chisti invite the rich pilgrims for charity works. Similarly at the shrine of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti Khadims run a charitable society of Syed Zadgan. Beside providing educational scholarship to the students widow receive a fixed monthly amount from the shrine.

The income generated from the shrine is used by officials for managing and extension of the affairs of the shrine. A bulk of money is spent for organizing various ceremonies and functions. Four lakh (400000) pilgrims visit annually at the time of *Urs*. The shrines contribute largely for the economic prosperity of the city where they are located. Markets, laundries, banks, restaurants, guest houses, book shops and flower shops extract good income from the pilgrims who have come for performing rituals and ceremonies at the shrines.

The saints under study casted a critical influence and effect on the political authorities of their time and place. It is worthy to note that apart from general people, rulers and beauracrates were also believers and followers of the saints. Several rulers and administrators sought blessings from the saint time to time especially when they were at war, in need or in state crisis. They contributed financially for the extension of the shrine especially the shrines of India were largely extended and constructed on the instigation of Mughal rulers. They also gifted precious items and goods.

Its also worthy to note that various buildings, tombs and parts of the shrine under study bears historical names since its construction was financially supported by various rulers, administrators and authorities of the time. In the case of the shrine of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti at Ajmer, Usmani gate, Shah Jahan gate, Akbari mosque, Aulia mosque, Alamgiri mosque, Begami Dalan, Diwan Khana, reflects the intervention and contribution of Mughal rulers for the affairs and extension of the shrine. These Mughal rulers were the believers and intimate to the saint, they paid, homage and expressed their love and veneration for the saint by financially supporting for the extension of the shrine.

Whereas, the shrines of Iran do not possess such historical names and buildings since the culture, rule and social set up of India and Iran is dissimilar to an extent. It is worthy to note that the shrines of Iran have more endowments, charity institutions and centres for

social service as compare to that of India. The shrines of Iran is technically more equipped and focuses on providing education to the people through libraries, astronomy centre and computer facilities. The shrine largely contributes in propagating religious sciences and scientific knowledge among the people of Ray. Hence the shrine of Iran especially of Hazrat Abdul Azim's Hasani in Ray is comparatively more advanced and educationally equipped with facilities and resources, besides being a religious centre.

A close study of the physical description of the shrines reveals that the buildings and extensions attracts large number of believers and pilgrims to the shrine. The premises of the shrines, especially its glorious and magnificent buildings, artistic decorations and its splendour enthralls the senses of the pilgrims. They are pleased by observing the buildings. Moreover, the spiritual elegance of the shrine makes it a sacred and important place for the men of faith.

It is worthy to note that the shrines witness a reciprocal contribution. On one hand it provides, employment, economic prosperity and business profits to the people attached to it directly and indirectly and on the other hand believers and pilgrims visiting the shrine spent money on endowments, gifts and purchasing things essential for rituals contributing a good income. Hence the shrine gives spiritual and charitable benefits to the pilgrims and in return a good income is generated through them which is used for repair and extension work of the shrine. In both ways general people including

pilgrims, officials and other associates are benefitted. Hence, these religious centres are “bread and butter” for several officials and associates of the shrines.

Daily, weekly, monthly and yearly performances at the shrine including mourning ceremonies in Moharram and celebrations such as Eid-ul-Fitr, Eid-ul-Azha, Eid-ul-Qadeer Khum and birth anniversary of Prophet, Imams and saints gives spiritual and religious edge to the believers. Since religion is the product of social cause. Pilgrims attain collective consciousness and participate in the rituals and ceremonies held at shrine with full zest and zeal.

Shrines also act as the centre of meditation, expiation of sins and awareness for good deeds. Pilgrims visit the shrine with a specific aim and urge to realize the importance and purposes of their visit. Generally the purpose is rooted in solving their problems through the intercession of saints. As ‘the saints has always been the intermediary between their followers and the spiritual power’.⁶

It is worthy to note that pilgrims visiting the shrines are conscious and careful about their hygiene, they wear clean clothes and consider all belongings of the shrines as pious and sacred. Hence they kiss and touch the entry gate of the shrine. It is also considerable to note that the essential part of any pilgrimage *tawaf* is performed by the pilgrims at all the shrines under study.

Present study focuses on the various degrees and genre of problems and its solutions which pilgrims seek at the shrines. Usually the pilgrims seek solution of ailment, child birth, family disputes, financial problems, bankruptcy, matrimonial etc. Pilgrims have firm faith and belief in the miraculous power of saints and seek their blessings. For pilgrims, saints are a link to God.

Hence, saints of the shrines under study casted a psychological, religious and spiritual effect on the believers which is essential for moulding faith and belief in God. Personality of these saints are regarded by large numbers of believers and people as exemplars of piety and spirituality. These saints effectively inculcated faith and belief in their disciples for God.

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